M 197 484 101 177 my grandmother who, with her plot of paddy land and her fruit and vegetable gardens, was among the wealthiest in the village, never connected these with her children or those of her friends.

M 871 857 792 Grandfather died when quite young, leaving my Paw-Pwa (Grandmother) with four sons and two daughters, of whom my father was the eldest. Like all the boys of the village, my father after eight or nine years of unrestrained childish delights when he could play all day, in the stream and up and down the village streets, stopping only when hungry or tired, wheedling the grown-ups to let him sit up till late at night listening to stories, was sent to the monastery on the outskirts of the village. The word for monastery in Burmese, *kyaung*, is the same as the word used for school, and it was to be taught learning and holiness, obedience and discipline, dexterity in manual and domestic tasks, and to be given a deep spiritual influence to last throughout life, that Grandmother and her friends sent their sons there. The parents whose hearts suffered too much at the thought of inflicting any punishment themselves now handed B them over to the monks with the plea that they would teach them to be good and obedient, and chastise them severely if they did not obey.

792 ●792 346 The kyaung at Ye, like all kyaungs in Burma, was built in surroundings chosen for their pleasantness. On a slight slope overlooking the stream was a pagoda, the pagoda of the village where the people came on fasting and feast days to kneel on the paved platform around the tapering golden spire and recite the precepts. Down from the platform the steps were lined with shady trees, and to one side of this was the monastery, a wooden building with verandahs and tiered roofs, set in a large garden, containing a few flower beds for offerings at the altars, but chiefly wide shady spaces, great trees including a *nyaung-bin* (a sacred banyan, with huge spreading branches), flowering *gangaw* trees and deep green mango trees. In one corner was a well.

B 793 792 181 The monks consisted of the *saya-daw*, the senior monk who acted as head and abbot, about twenty monks who had been formally admitted to the order and were called *upasins*, and a number of novices who were wearing the yellow robe either for a short time, or to be admitted as monks later on. My father and his companions were admitted as *kyaungthas*, scholars. The monks spent their days in the recitation of religious formulæ and teachings, in meditation, in the telling of beads and the teaching of scholars. They did this while observing a strict and simple life, abstaining from solid food after noon, possessing no goods except the essential articles laid down in the monastic rules, observing chastity and poverty. To the people of the village they were the embodiment of good and holiness, living the noblest and most meritorious life a man can live. The people addressed them in conversation as

593 857 539 Or of far-off Meiktila Lake where the water stretches seven miles ong:

Meiktila kan-daw auk ka	From the waters of Meiktila Lake
Hpa kauk hkè ba	Pick up a frog for me.
Hpa pa yin ta gaung pay ba	Poor little frog,
Myet lon ga kyaung taung taung hnin,	Eyes big agog, And body so thin and wee.
Hpa gaung ga thay.	

Or the jumping nonsensical rhyme about Gyat-Aye who got beaten by her mother and wept in a dark corner and started a train of kaleidoscopic events, for every time a line ended with a clanging rhythm it suggested a rhyming word to shout out and continue its own associations, and when you got back to a rhyme for Gyat-Aye, you had to start all over again, and poor Gyat-Aye got beaten and cried as long as children's voices held out.

Gyat-Aye	Gyat-Aye
Thu amay yaik lo	Beat by her mother so,
Hmaung maik hma ngo	Cries in dark corner "Oh",
Ko Lu Byo	Young bachelor Ko
Hta-yan pauk ka	Through hole in the mantel
Chay-dauk ko swè,	Pulls at her ankle
Twè-lè !	Dangle !
Twè-le yè	Dangling yet wait awhile,
Nay ba ohn	The rain clouds pile,
Mo tway ka chon	The heavens clang,
Mok lon !	Meringue !
Mok lon yè sekku kat pa lo	Meringue with paper stuck below
Kya ka-lat hnin hsun-daw tin	Offer at altar in lacquer bowl,
Pa-lin paw ka myauk kalay,	From throne seat the monkey gay
Hsin chi lo pyay	Runs down and off with it away !
Gyat-Aye !	Gyat-Aye !

593 •782 Before going to bed, A-Kyi or Ngwe Yin took us in to say our prayers in chorus. We then *shikkoed* our parents, that is, made obeisance to them by folding hands and bowing till our foreheads and outstretched palms touched the ground, first to my father, then to my mother, and they said in turn each night: *"Pongyi-ba-say, thetshay-ba-say meba hnin-o-aung-min-aung paung-ya-ba-say :* May your holiness be great and your life long, may you be united with your parents even until the attainment of old age."

873 We could not stage these shows at the University owing to the length of
536 them and the difficulty of procuring a company. We saw them often in childhood when there were two great companies touring the districts. Po Sein and Sein Gadon came with their companies to the district towns; they hired the local hall, and then charged their audiences by mat-space. Buyers of spaces came earlier in the day and laid down their thinbyus over the rough bamboo mats provided. At night the whole family, including grandmothers and young children, arrived with pillows, fans, goblets of drinking water and things to eat, and squatted and reclined each on its own mat. Vendors of pickled tea and jujube plums, both of which have the effect of keeping one awake, walked in and sold their packets without a license, but just as an overflow from the row of food stalls that had sprung up in the lane leading to the hall.

545 At the University, however, we always staged *anyein-pwès*, and not
873 these night-long zat-pwès. An anyein is a much handier, more compact sort of entertainment. The troupe consists of two clowns, one chief dancing girl and two subsidiary ones, and a band of musicians. Such a troupe can be hired for about Rs. 40/-. No seats are ever bought for an anyein; people hire them to celebrate weddings, shinbyus and other happy events. They perform on a rough open-air stage, and the show is free to all who wish to flock to see it. The poorest beggars may perch themselves on neighbouring trees and fences to enjoy the four-or five-hour programme of songs, dances and jokes.

545 When an anyein was held at University College, we entered the
534 grounds at about 7 p.m. and found the stage with its rear occupied by the orchestra tuning instruments and practising snatches of the airs; in the
• [782] centre a basinful of offerings to propitiate the nat-spirits so that the entertainment will be a success; and at the opposite corners of the front of the stage the two clowns squatting, watching the audience enter and uttering declamations about the occasion of the entertainment; but as yet in a very desultory fashion, while they scratched their heads, cleaned their ears and chewed betel, because nobody was ready to pay full attention. Very shortly, however, the orchestra came to life in a harmonious concert. Within the circular frames of two big harmonicums, about two to three feet high and four to five feet in diameter, sat the master players. The *kyi-waing* master was surrounded by a row of graduated gongs strung along the inside of the harmonicum, which he struck with a knobbed stick in quick melody. The *saing-waing* master produced a thinner strain from his graduated drums which he struck with the flat of his fingers. Between the two sat a *hnè* player, blowing loudly his clarionet which had a wide bell-shaped mouth; the *pulway* master played lively dancing notes on his flute; a gentle looking youth

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Not only has every day its special character and its fixe
805 letters, but there is also a particular animal assigned to
825 symbolise it, and red or yellow wax candles are made in
● 782 the forms of these animals to be offered at the Pagoda by the
[527] pious. Each worshipper offers the creature-candle representing his birthday, or that of any particular friend or relation whom he wishes well. In this way Monday is represented by a tiger; Tuesday, by a lion; Wednesday, by an elephant with tusks; Yahu, by an elephant without tusks; Thursday, by a rat; Friday, by a guinea-pig; Saturday, by a nagā or dragon; Sunday, by a kalôn, the fabulous half-beast, half-bird, which guards one of the terraces of Mount Myinmo (Meru), the centre of the universe.

782 Little candles of this kind are to be had at any of the
443 stalls which cluster about the steps and the base of every pagoda in the country, and they are as freely offered as flowers, and fruits, and gold-leaf.

551 It will be seen that there is no such thing as a surname
553 among the Burmese. A man may have a dozen sons not one of whom has the same name as his father. Maung, literally "brother," has come to stand practically for "Mister." Po and Shwe and Ba may be applied to any one without regard to his birthday, Shwe implying usually politeness or affection. Nga, used in the English law-courts and by pompous native officials generally, implies superiority claimed by the speaker or writer. Ko denotes friendship, or superior age and dignity in the person addressed. Maung Shwe Than might call himself indifferently—Maung Than, Po Than, Ba Than, Ko Than, Nga Than, or Shwe Than, and might add Maung to any one of these. As a matter of fact most Burmans chop about their name a good deal during their lives. He may begin by being called Lugale Ngè, "Little Wee Man." When he grows up a little the family probably get to call him Lugale Gyi, "Big Little Man." Later, when he begins to think of his appearance and look after the girls—and they begin that sort of thing very early in Burma—he probably calls himself Maung Lugale or Shwe Lugale, "Mr. Littleman," or "Mr. Boy," or "Golden Boy." There are a variety of other changes possible and likely. Finally, when he reaches the age of thirty-five or forty he either readopts the original Ngè and calls himself

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Taninla kya
Ta-sè nga
Ne nya
She yat ga.

Monday's number, I ween,
Is always fifteen;
The tiger's the beast,
And its place is the East.

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There are various ways of calculating the horoscope, most of them not to be understanded of the people, but the most popular, because the preliminaries are evident to everybody, is from the numbers given above. A person born on Monday remains under the influence of the moon for fifteen years. Then he passes into the house of Mars and sojourns there for eight years. At the age of twenty-three, Mercury presides over him and continues to do so for the next seventeen years, and so on to the end, which mounts up to 108 years. Should he outlive that he would begin the circle over again. Another way is to divide the inquirer's age by eight. If there is no remainder, the horoscope is made up from the gyo under which he was born. If there is a remainder, the Bedin Sayā counts it out round the figure, in the direction of the hands of a watch, commencing with the birth planet. Thus a man born on Thursday, now twenty-nine years of age, would be under the influence of the moon. The gyo at the four cardinal points, east, south, west, and north are happy in their influences, those on the diagonal rhumbs not so good. Yahu, and especially Saturday, have a particularly sinister influence. A man does most of the stupid and vicious things in his life while he is in Saturn's house. A young man born on Wednesday will need a lot of ballast to tide him through the ten years of Saturn, seeing that he enters on the danger at the age of seventeen.

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Little gilded and red painted signboards are put up at all the pagodas, displaying the nan, the symbol, and the relative position of all the planets. Sometimes people worshipping at the pagoda go to the point of the gyo, in whose house they were born, and offer up their lauds and candles there. But this is a mere matter of individual fancy, and is hardly open to those born in the diagonally situated

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houses, for the niche shrines, if there are more than one at the pagoda, are always at the four cardinal points, and if there is only one, as is usual at small pagodas, it is to the East.

The sadā is carefully kept by the parents until the child is old enough to take care of it himself, and thenceforward it is guarded as the most valuable possession the person has. No matter how often the name is changed the new one is never put in the sadā, so that this certificate cannot be trusted to implicitly for a man's name. Some of them are very beautifully engraved and ornamented, but they are naturally not often to be seen. I only know of two in England at the present time (1881), one of which is my own and the other belonging to a travelling Burman. When a man dies, the sadā is either destroyed or preserved as a memento by the family. A great many sadās were found and carried off as curiosities during the Third Burmese War. There is one at Abbotsford.

A curious instance of the firm belief of the nation in the reasonableness of the conviction that the planet under which one is born influences the fates and actions of one's life, is the fact that royalty ordained that the coins and measures used by traders should bear the emblem of the monarch's birthday. Thus for example all the gold coins used in Upper Burma bazaars during the penultimate reign had the figure of a lion on them, Mindôn Min having been born on a Tuesday. The few remaining from previous reigns bearing other symbols were rigidly kept out of the sight of Burmese officials. The Convenor of the Fifth Great Synod, though probably the mildest and best sovereign Burma ever had, would certainly have stood no trifling in matters of this kind, which, if not amounting actually to a part of the religion, were at any rate very intimately connected with it. His son Thibaw Min, however, notoriously indifferent to religion, if a stronger word might not even be admissible, let the old weights remain in use, and probably called it the march of civilisation.

The naming and the construction of the sadā being finished, the principal events in the youthful Burman's life are over, and the children run about in as happy a state of nudity as the respectability of the family permits; and boys and girls steal grandmamma's chewpot and patter about

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for the day, filter it, and place it ready for use; the more advanced novices and others of full rank to sweep round the sacred trees and water them; the elders to meditate in solitude on the regulations of the order. Meditation is beyond all other actions meritorious. The first meditation of the day should be on the miseries of life and the conviction that we cannot free ourselves from them; such thoughts are honourable beyond the founding of a pagoda, or praying for the salvation of all living creatures. Some gather flowers and offer them before the pagoda, to impress upon the mind the virtues of the great teacher and the weaknesses and shortcomings of human nature.

Then comes the first meal of the day, a light refection usually preceded by a homily or grace, to the effect that the rice is eaten not to please the appetite, but to satisfy the wants of the body; that the yellow habit is worn not for vanity, but to cover nakedness; that they dwell in this house not for vainglory, but to be protected from the inclemency of the weather; that medicine is taken merely to recover health, and that health is desirable only that they may attend with greater diligence to prayer and meditation. After the meal all proceed to study for an hour. The ko-yins repeat what lessons they have learnt and apply themselves to new tasks. The early morning is considered especially favourable for committing to memory.

It is now close on eight o'clock, and, arranging themselves in Indian file, they set forth in orderly procession, with the abbot at their head, to beg their food. Slowly they wend their way through the chief street of the town or village, halting when any one comes out to pour his contribution of rice, or fruit, or vegetables, into the alms-bowl, but never saying a word, or even raising the eyes from the ground. It is they who confer the favour, not the givers. Were it not for the passing of the mendicants, the charitable would not have the opportunity of gaining for themselves merit. Not even a glance rewards the most bounteous donation. With eyes fixed unwaveringly on the ground six feet before them, and hands clasped beneath the begging-bowl, they pass on, solemnly meditating on their own unworthiness and the vileness of all human things. There are

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out with his axe and hollow with his finger-nails. There were a few such cells cut in the rocks at the back of Mandalay Hill, and visitors to the sacred spot occasionally came across one of the hermits striding along, wrapped in thought, grasping an iron staff hung with rings, the rattle of which warns the people to get out of the way and not disturb the holy man's meditations. A few go away from human society altogether, just as St. Simeon Stylites isolated himself on a pillar, and the old Culdee monks from the north of England and Scotland wandered off to the snowy wastes of Iceland, there to seek repose and relief from the turmoil of the world. It is said that the Thadda, the grammar, was added to the Bitaghat, that the hermits who had withdrawn to the jungle might not destroy the power of the sermons and lauds by mispronunciation.

Mandalay Hill is always occupied, for the spot is particularly sacred. King Mindôn used to send thither daily a hundred fowls which had been bought and saved from death, and the pious gave them plenty to eat. Similar proceedings caused the sneer of Purchas, "For men they hadde not an hospitall that were thus hospitall to fowles"; but this is hardly deserved, at any rate in Burma. There in every monastery the Kappiya-dayaka has a stock of money, raised by selling the presents given to the monks, which he devotes in charity to the well-deserving sick and to poor travellers, while any one is welcome at all times to shelter and food in the kyaung as long as he conducts himself properly. The yatheit may be looked upon with pious awe for his austerities and mortifications of the flesh, but the ordinary pyin-sin is more favourably regarded. The building of monasteries and the giving of presents to their inmates is a constant strain on the generosity of the people. It is far more difficult to keep the balance of merit on the right side in Burma than in other countries. Almsgiving is a constant and imperative expense, in addition to regular and personal worship at the pagoda. In Thibet wind or water drives the prayer-machines for extinguishing sin, and the goodman acquires merit while he is snoring at night with his wife at his back. In some parts practical householders are able to calculate exactly what is set down to

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735 their credit, by the expedient of having the prayer-wheels turned when necessary by oxen. But nothing of this kind is practicable in Burma. You must pay your devotions in person, and unless you supplement these by almsgiving, your prospects towards a next existence are not such as your friends can regard otherwise than with concern. Fortunately the more holy the receiver the greater the merit of the alms. To support one hundred ordinary men is not so much as to feed one yahan, and so on in increasing ratio. The merit of giving one single meal to a Buddha outweighs that of supplying ten million Pyitzega Buddhas with food. Thus the kyaungs are always well furnished, and their advantage in affording education to the children further gives them a hold over the country. It will be long before the number of monasteries decreases in Burma.

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CHAPTER XV

PAGODAS

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SOME one with a greater regard for alliteration than the truth once said that the principal productions of Burma were pagodas, pôngyis, and pariah dogs. As a superficial impression this is neat, and therefore it will continue to be quoted by forcible feebles to the end of their days, in Bays-water or Ealing. It certainly is marvellous how many pagodas there are in the country, far exceeding the number of those raised in the sacred island of Ceylon, or by the Thibetans and Chinese, pious Buddhists, though they have fallen into sad doctrinal heresies. A Burman does not notice the multitude of the religious edifices in his country till he leaves it and finds how far more sparing other nations are in their places of worship. The poorest village has its neatly kept shrine, with the remains of others mouldering away round about it. No hill is so steep and rocky, or so covered with jungle, as to prevent the glittering gold or snow-white spire rising up to guard the place from ghouls and sprites, and remind the surrounding people of the Saviour Lord, the teacher of Nirvana and the Law. There is good reason for this multiplication of fanes. No work of merit is so richly paid as the building of a pagoda. The Payā-taga is regarded as a saint on earth, and when he dies he obtains the last release; for him there are no more deaths. The man who sets up a row of water-pots on a dusty road does well; he who raises a ta-gôn-daing, or sacred post, who builds a rest-house, presents an image or a bell, or founds a monastery, gains much kutho and ensures a happy transincorporation when he passes away; but the

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778 Payā-taga is finally freed from the three calamities, his kan
● 782 is complete, the merits outweigh the demerits, and he attains the holy rest. That, at any rate, is the comforting belief, cherished by the most reprobate. Little wonder then that, with such a glorious reward in store for him, the pious man hoards his wealth for such an object, and that pagodas are so plentiful in the land. It avails little to repair a previous dedication, unless it be one of the great world shrines at Rangoon, Pegu, Prome, or Mandalay. In the case of ordinary pagodas the merit of the repair goes practically entirely to the original founder. Hence that puzzle to Europeans, the building of a bright new place of worship close to one which a very little care would save from crumbling away into a simple tumulus.

778 The word pagoda is seemingly a kind of verbal *hysteron proteron*, a metathesis of the Cinghalese dhagoba, derived from the Sanskrit dhatu garba, a relic shrine, and is properly applied only to a monument raised over some of the remains of the Lord Buddha. Such are dat-daw, pieces of Shin Gautama's flesh; an-daw, his teeth; san-daw, his hair; thin-gyat-daw, the frontal bone; hnyat-yo-daw, the jaw-bone, besides others. In addition to these there are the sacred utensils and other articles used by the teacher of the Law, such as the thengan, the yellow robe; the thabeit, or alms-bowl; the taung-we-daw, his staff; the padi, or rosary, and other things of the same kind. These holy relics, however, could not go far, even if they had been equitably divided between the great countries professing Buddhism, which they certainly were not. Burma alone claims more personal remains than could possibly have existed. The same thing is, I believe, true of Popish relics in Europe, where pieces of the true cross are as abundant as portions of the dress of the founder of Buddhism are in Burma. It is useless attempting to prove or disprove the authenticity of particular relics. To admit of the multiplication of shrines, models of the sacred things are permitted, and these only, in metal, precious stones, or clay, are deposited under the vast majority of pagodas. But images and sacred books are also so enshrined, and thus arises the classification of the four kinds of shrines, the Zedi le-ba.

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779 patience; fortitude; wisdom; benevolence; truthfulness; indifference.

The Five Renouncings are the giving up, for holiness' sake, of—children; wife; goods; life; one's self.

775 This cannot all be effected in one existence, unless piety has been exhibited in many previous lives. Much depends on one's kan, the accumulation of merits from past time. Just as the fruits on a tree are some of them good, some bad, but have little or nothing in common with each other, or with those that went before, or may come after, so it is with a man's kan. But the diligent observance of the holy precepts, and especially the exercise of open-handed charity, will always tend to reduce the number of lives to be endured before the deliverance comes.

● 782 788 Prayer there is none in the technical sense of the word, and the doxologies repeated at the shrines are mostly those learnt in childhood at the monastery school, or special compositions of each individual for himself. There is nothing laid down in any of the Buddhist religious books concerning the formulæ of prayer. Whatever there is, is taken from the Apyin Aung-gyin, the record of the triumph of Shin Gautama over the outer foes, Mān-nat, the spirit of evil, and his daughters, and the Atwin Aung-gyin, the triumph over the inward foes, the kiletha, the passions of mankind. Many, however, repeat little more than the tharana-gōng, the form with which the pôngyis almost invariably commence worship: "I worship the Buddha; I worship the Law; I worship the Assembly." This, with the aneiksa, dôkha, anatta, "change, pain, illusion," forms the sentence to be repeated on the rosary. A very usual form of doxology commonly taught to the scholars of the kyaungs, and therefore retained through life, is the following:—"Awgatha, Awgatha, I worship with the body, with the mouth, and with the mind, with these three kans. The first, the second, the third; once, twice, until three times. The Lord, the precious one; the Law, the precious one; the Assembly, the precious one; these three precious things. I, the worshipper, most humbly, with fervid zeal, with clasped hands, pay reverence, give offerings, and with pious gaze bow me down. Thus by this worshipping I gain merit and

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increase in earnestness and purity of heart, and am freed from the Four States of Punishment; from the Three Evil Things, starvation, plague, and warfare; from the Eight Chambers of Hell; and from the Five Enemies. And at the end, when the last existence has come for me, may I pass into Ne'ban."

Such "prayers" are addressed not merely to the image, but to the whole pagoda, and not even on the platform of the latter. It is common for the pious at any period of the day to repeat their devotions simply in the direction of the pagoda, and often from a spot where hardly even the summit of it can be seen. The pilgrims to the Shwe Dagôn Payā in Rangoon prostrate themselves at intervals from the moment they catch sight of its glittering spire; but they repeat nothing further than the above, or some more fanciful formula, such as this: "Awgatha, Awgatha, Awgatha, I worship the footsteps of the great, the brilliant Buddha, to whom even the savage hunters turn, and the fierce dragons on the mountain tops and in the abysses of the hills. In the far land of Thiho (Ceylon) there, where, in the wilderness of woods, far from human dwellings, temples and pagodas rise up 84,000 in number, in the caves and the deeps; there I worship, there I bow me in devotion." By far the greater number, however, repeat simple Pali sentences, of which they have long forgotten the meaning, if indeed they ever knew it. Many of the pyin-sin can repeat whole books and chapters in the sacred tongue, without having any but a very confused notion of the meaning of what they utter. Yet even this parrot-like performance has its merit, for it brings the mind into a fit state to contemplate the great ideal. A conclusive proof of this is recorded in the Malla Lingaya Wuttu, the life of Shin Gautama. There were many bats who lived in a cave in the time of the last Buddha, Kathapa, and great numbers of yahans were in the habit of resorting to this cave to meditate and give themselves up to devotion. These bats learned to repeat some of the phrases which they heard, but could not understand, and this pious exercise resulted in such benefit to their kan, that on their death they migrated to the seats of nat-dêwas. Afterwards, when Shin Gautama was preaching upon earth,

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they again appeared upon the seat of man as yahans, and, attending diligently to the precepts of the Law, were the first, as disciples of Thariputra, one of the chief followers of the Buddha, to comprehend the sublime law of the Abhidamma. If dumb creatures then can win such rewards for piety, how much more a man who repeats his sentences with at least a consciousness of what their import is.

Similar to this feeling with regard to the Pali jargon, of which every Burman knows more or less, according to the length of his stay in the monastery or the depth of his religious sentiments, and prompted by a like idea, is the offering of little nan-tagôn. These prayer-flags—kyet-sha-taing, as they are sometimes called—are made of paper, cut fancifully into figures of dragons, lizards, and the like, with embroidery-work round their edges. In the centre is written some pious reflection or aspiration, and the offerer places it on the shrine. Most of those sold ready composed for the worshipper are in Pali, those which he writes for himself, in Burmese. Samples of these inscriptions are:—

"By means of this paper the offerer will become very strong."

"By the merit of this paper Wednesday's children will be blessed by spirits and men."

"May the man born on Friday gain reward for his pious offering."

"This paper is an offering for people born on any day of the week from Sunday to Saturday."

"May the man born on Monday be freed from sickness and from the Three Calamities."

Very often nothing but the names of certain days of the week are written on the nan-tagôn; but sometimes a friend of humanity, or a man with a particularly large family, covering with their birthdays the whole week, simply writes down the names of the days in any order he pleases. The commonest form at the stalls round about the Shwe Dagôn is this simple, bald list, and indeed Rangoon is particularly badly supplied in this way. There are other small flags or streamers made of coloured cloth, some of them, especially those presented by the Shans, stitched with many

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plies until they stand out quite stiff. Others again are made of varnished strips of zinc. These have nothing written on them, and stand simply for the advancement in piety of their offerers, as do the candles representing the various nan, the animals which stand for the days of the week. Other offerings are flowers, single or arranged in bouquets, and almost invariably distinguished by the heavy sweetness of their odour. Candles and tapers, of all sizes and styles of manufacture, abound; some a couple of feet high, or occasionally much more, made of long, narrow coloured tapers, plaited together over an ordinary solid one, some plain white, others coloured all the hues of the rainbow, European manufactured sperm or paraffin articles, and home-made tapers of the crudest style of dip. Side by side with these are placed smoky oil-lamps, consisting of a little flat saucer full of oil, with a wick composed of a bit of cloth or a few threads of cotton roughly twisted together. The candles are simply softened with a match at the bottom and made to stick on the ledges in front of or round about the figures of the Buddha. Incense sticks and scented wood are often burnt on stone altars erected specially for such fire offerings.

The worshippers, if they are men, squat down, neither kneeling nor sitting down, but resting the body on their heels as miners who are accustomed to low workings do. The body is bent a little forward, and the hands are joined together and raised to the forehead. The women kneel down altogether, and for this reason take especial care to cover up their feet, sometimes getting a friend to tuck their skirts over them. All are of course barefooted. The sandals are removed always at the foot of the pagoda steps, though these may begin in some places many hundred yards away from the shrine. Before commencing the repetition of the formulæ, three prostrations are made with the forehead to the ground, and the same is repeated at the close, and on rising to depart you must turn to the right. It is usual to hold some offering between the hands during worship—a prayer-flag, a flower, or something of the kind—and this is afterwards reverently deposited on the altar. A favourite offering, instead of real flowers, is pauk-pauk. This is the

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CHAPTER XXII

NATS AND SPIRIT-WORSHIP

NOTWITHSTANDING that Buddhism has been the established religion in Burma since shortly after the third great council at Patalipootra in 241 B.C. (283 of the sacred era), and that the purest form of the faith exists, and is firmly believed in, yet, throughout the whole Ashe Pyi (the Eastern country), both in Upper and Lower Burma, the old geniolatry still retains a firm hold on the minds of the people. Missionaries say that it is a natural revolting of the human mind against the denial of the existence of a Supreme Being, superior to man, and controlling his destiny. Government officers assert that the retention of the prior religion (for it is undoubtedly a kind of second religion) is due to the fact that surrounding, and scattered about amongst the Buddhist Burmans, are numerous tribes—Karens, Kachins, and others—who have no form of belief but nat-worship, the reverencing of the spirits of nature. As a simple matter of fact, it is undeniable that the propitiating of the nats is a question of daily concern to the lower class Burman, while the worship at the pagoda is only thought of once a week. For the nat may prove destructive and hostile at any time, whereas the acquisition of kutho at the pagoda is a thing which may be set about in a business-like way, and at proper and convenient seasons. It is just the difference between avoiding a motor car and avoiding the circular saw in a timber mill.

Before proceeding further, it will be well to discuss the word "nat" itself. General Phayre and Bishop Bigandet did not finally settle whether Nat is derived from the Sanskrit term nath, meaning "master, husband, lord," or not. The

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and little morsels of food. Often, if the village is larger, the shrine is much more pretentious, assuming almost the size and appearance of a zayat, a large tectum or roof, gabled and supported with red posts, the platform ornamented, and with a dais at one end, on which a representation of the nat is placed at the feast time, which, in imitation of the pagoda festivals, occurs at a regular fixed season. At other times these images are kept stowed away in an adjoining chamber, built for the purpose. It is particularly irritating to an educated Burman to see these absurd figures, which remind one of nothing so much as the fetiches of the prognathous African. Two gaudily dressed puppets, masquerading with spire-like crown, and royal, sharp-pointed swords, represent the much-feared nats, Shwe Pyin-gyi and Shwe Pyin-ngè, the Nyi-daw, Naung-daw, the Royal Younger Brother and the Royal Elder Brother, who command much respect in the neighbourhood of Mandalay and in Upper Burma generally. A still more dreaded spirit is one whose representation figures in a shrine at Tagaung, one of the ancient capitals of the country, half-way between Mandalay and Bhamaw. He appears simply as a head on a post, four feet high or thereabouts. A spire-like crown rests on his head, his eyes protrude and goggle in semi-globular wrath, asinine ears and a Punch-like nose complete the likeness, for he has no mouth, and his body is that of a dragon. Every one avoids his temple as much as possible, but the inhabitants of the village bow in that direction before they venture to do anything, and passing boatmen kindle lamps and offer flowers, of which he is said to be particularly fond, and fruit, for the nat has an incorrigible habit of giving people the stomach-ache when he is offended, and death punishes the recalcitrant. "Tagaung colic" is a recognised ailment with the Burmese faculty. The demon is said to have been one of the ancient kings of the place, who acquired his power from magical arts which he learned in Northern India. Three famous pagodas in the defile take their names from episodes in his life; and his two sons founded the dynasty of Prome. Oftenest of all, however, the nat-shrine contains no figure. It is occupied only by the viewless spirits of the air.

First in the list of personal spirits may be considered the

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First in the list of personal spirits may be considered the kosaung nats, a kind of confusion of ideas between the proper spirit and the butterfly spirit, and representing as it were the genius of each individual, a kind of materialised conscience. They are twelve in number, six good and six bad, six male and six female, and regulate the life and doings of their *protégé* accordingly as the benevolent or the malevolent gain the upper hand.

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Next to these comes the eing saung nat, very often called Min-magayi, the guardian nat of the house. For his comfort the tops of all the posts in the house are covered with a hood of white cotton cloth, for it is in this situation that he usually takes up his abode. In almost every house, at the end of the verandah in front, you will find a water-pot full of pareityé, water over which certain gathas, magic spells, or religious formulæ have been uttered by the astrologer, or the prior of the district. This water, which is replenished once a month, or oftener in cases of danger from disease, or when a member of the family is absent on a journey, is every now and then sprinkled about the house as a protection against bilus and spectres, ogres and tasés. When the water is consecrated in this nyaungye-o, which is of a special shape, something like an overgrown Indian spittoon, there are always a few twigs and leaves of the thabyé tree floating on the top. These are mostly taken out and hung round about the eaves, but occasionally left in the water. The inordinately superstitious sometimes keep a small thabyé bin (the sacred eugenia) growing in a pot in the house, so that its benign influence may keep harm away. Talaing houses may usually be known by the cocoa-nut hanging up at the south side of the building. This is covered with strips and tags of yellow or red cloth, and is offered to Min-magayi, whom they call the king of the nats. Of these spirits (called kaluk in their language) they say there are thirty-seven distinct varieties, but Min-magayi rules them all. These are the "thirty-seven nats of Burma," but whether they were borrowed by the Burmese from the Talaings or not seems at any rate doubtful. At the beginning of the wet season they always wrap up the cocoa-nut afresh, and when the rains are over make new offerings of money, glutinous rice, eggs, jaggari, and fruit, in order that the eing saung nat may

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keep away fever from the household. It must not be supposed that the nat guardian of the house has necessarily any affection for those who have built the place where he has taken up his abode. He probably regards them only with cold indifference, however generous they may be in their offerings, and were he not propitiated by these gifts he would almost certainly display his anger by doing the inhabitants some grievous injury. But then he dislikes his haunts being intruded upon, and if a stranger comes at an unwonted time—a burglar at midnight, for example—it is quite likely that the eing saung nat will attack him violently, scare him out of his wits, or give him the colic. Thus without any really estimable purpose in his mind, Min-magayi may be a considerable protection to his worshippers, just as an "awful example" is useful to teetotallers.

Beyond this guardian, or demon of the house, there is the guardian nat of the village, the ywa saung nat, of whose shrine at the end of the town I have already made mention. None of the lower-class Talaings would ever think of eating a morsel without first holding up his platter in the air, and breathing a prayer to the village nat. They are particularly fond of putting up shrines to the nats under the le'pan tree, from the wood of which coffins are frequently made. A feast must be held every three or four years in honour of this nat, at which the natkadaw, a woman called the nat's wife, dances. This is done in order that sickness may be kept away. Should an epidemic actually break out, a very elaborate ceremony is gone through. Probably first of all the figure of a spectre, or of a bilu, is painted on an ordinary earthenware water-pot, and this is solemnly smashed to pieces about sundown, with a heavy stick or a dah. As soon as it gets dark, the entire populace break out into yells, and make as much noise generally as they can compass, with the view of scaring away the evil spirit who has brought the disease. This is repeated on three several nights, and if it is not then effective the yahans are called in to give their assistance. The prior, with his following, repeat the Ten Precepts, chant the Payeit-gyi, and then one of the sermons of the Lord Buddha is declaimed, the same by the preaching of which he drove away the pestilence

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which was devastating the country of Wethali. If this last ceremony is not effectual the village is abandoned. The inhabitants leave the sick and the dying to their fate, and go off to the jungle, where each household camps out by itself for a time. Before they return again, the yellow-robed monks, in recognition of much alms, read the Law up and down the street between the houses. When they have gone back to the monastery, the nat's shrine is repaired, and abundant offerings deposited. Having thus made their peace with the representatives of both religions, the people return to their houses, light fires, cook rice for new offerings, and then enter upon their ordinary pursuits as if no interruption whatever had occurred.

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This is what would take place in any ordinary Burman village. But among the Talaings, and in the more retired places in the jungle, occupied by ignorant uncultivated Burmans, the function called ywakyathi would be carried out, which is much more purely geniolatric in its character. This is sometimes done when a prominent man in the hamlet is sick, more often when there is danger of a contagious disease. A great feast of cooked rice and meat, roasted fowls and ducks forming a prominent part of it, is heaped up on a platform specially erected for the purpose some distance outside the village. Everybody in the village is required to have some part in the ceremony. A few are sent out beforehand, who dress themselves up in a fantastic way, and pretend to be bilus, evil nats, and witches. With them are others who feign to be dogs, and rush about on all fours, barking and howling; others represent pigs, and grunt and nuzzle about with their noses in the ground. After this performance has been carried on for some time, the remainder of the villagers come out in a band, and, through one or more spokesmen, demand of the possessed whether those lying sick at home will recover, and whether the bad spirits are satisfied with the offerings. It is specially ordained at these exhibitions that no one shall be called by his real name; such mention, if made inadvertently, would expose the person addressed to considerable danger, even if he should make no sign betraying himself, for he certainly would not answer. The quasi tasés always reply that the

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sick will recover and the plague leave the locality. Thereupon the villagers rush off like madmen into the surrounding forest, and run about hither and thither in a reckless way with an open cloth, or the end of their waistcloth, in their hands. Some of them suddenly make a plunge with their cloth over a bush or a tussock of grass, and then closing it up carefully, hurry breathless back to the village. The leip-bya or "butterflies" of the sick man are supposed to have been captured. The paso, or cloth, is carefully opened and shaken over the patient's head, and the leip-bya is supposed to return to its proper habitation. This operation is repeated several times, in case a wrong "butterfly" might have been captured, or lest the actual one should have escaped on the way. Then everybody returns. The function is not without its danger, for it has happened that the [754] temporary mimes have become permanently possessed of evil spirits, and as witches and wizards have proved as great curses to the neighbourhood as any pestilence could have been. Which things are an allegory. The whole ceremony [178] is beginning to get into very bad odour in the more settled parts of the province, and respectable people avoid having anything to do with it, while those who have taken a part are ashamed to own it.

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All these nats are directly connected with a particular locality, and therefore well known to, and regularly propitiated by, the inhabitants of that place. But there are abundance of nats to be found elsewhere, away from villages and houses, and all of them equally ready to resent any injury which the passer-by may unwittingly do them. When a Burman starts on a journey he hangs a bunch of plantains, or a twig of the tha-bye tree, on the pole of the buffalo cart or the stern of the boat, to conciliate any spirit whose beat he may intrude upon. The fisherman makes offerings in his nat-sin every time he launches his dug-out; the lonely hunter in the forest deposits some rice and ties together a few leaves whenever he comes across some particularly large and imposing tree, lest there might be a thi'pinsaung nat dwelling there. Should there be none, the tied-back twigs will at any rate stand in evidence to the taw-saung nat, the demon who presides over all the forest.

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When there is a boat-race, the opposing crews have a preliminary row over the course with offerings placed on the prow for the nat who guards that stretch of the river. And so on through numberless examples. Some nats achieve fame, and are known far and wide by special appellations. Such is Maung In Gyi, a spirit who is feared in all the district round Rangoon, and away eastward and northward as far as Pegu. He lives in the water, and causes death. A special festival is celebrated in his honour, or rather in deprecation, in the month of Waso, the same in which Lent begins. Others more especially known in Upper Burma are Byindôn, Shwe Pyin-Gyi and his brother, and a drunkard nat called Maung Min Gyaw, to whom great quantities of rice spirit are offered. Uyingyi is a spirit universally known among the Talaings. The chief spirit of a district usually goes by the name of A-shin Gyi, the great lord, or, among the Talaings, Okkaya. Then there are generic names; there is the Hmin nat who lives in woods, and shakes those he meets so that they go mad. There is the Upaka, who flies about in the clouds to spy out men whom he may snap up. There is the Akakaso who lives in the tops of trees, Shekkaso who lives in the trunk, and Bumaso who is content with a dwelling in the roots. The presence of spirits or witches in trees may always be ascertained by the quivering and trembling of the leaves when all around are still.

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The Talaings, and many of the Burmans in the Irrawaddy delta, have a regular nat-feast just before harvesting begins. The figure of a woman is fashioned out of straw, and a tamein, kerchief, and other portions of female dress placed along with it in a bullock cart. Great quantities of kauk-hnyin, "sticky rice," are heaped up, and the whole driven in procession round the ripe paddy fields. The figure is then set up in the place where the paddy is to be stored, and the offerings are usually swept away by the boys of the place, whose appetites overcome their fear of the nats, Bumadi, the guardian of the earth, and Nagyi, the guardian of the grain, to propitiate whom the feast is held.

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There is a theory that persons who are executed or meet a violent death become nats and haunt the place where they

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phlegmatic old gentlemen capable, if you had seen them three days ago. Everywhere is bustle and excitement and anticipation. Even the township policemen have lost their ordinary official swagger, and are engaged in eager converse with individuals who, in ordinary times, command their attention in quite a different way.

There is very good reason for it. The full moon of Thadingyut is past; it is well on in October, and it is the time of the boat-races. For weeks past the Myanaung boat has been spurting up and down the long straight reach, or having a heavy training paddle to Akauktaung and back again, and now at last the great day has come. Myanaung has challenged Thônkwa, hitherto the unconquered champions of all the low country, and the race, in best-and-best boats, is to come off this afternoon. The down-river men with their boat, and pretty nearly the entire body of their fellow-villagers, arrived last night, and none except the privileged have seen anything of them yet, to enable them to judge whether they are in as fine form as they were last year when they rowed the Bassein boat to a standstill. No wonder there is excitement, for Myanaung is but a young subdivision, sprung up since the English occupation, with no speciality for paddlers, and Thônkwa cherishes a name for prowess on the river from far back in the old Burmese days.

But suddenly there is a lull in the buzz of talk, and every eye is directed up the river. The boats have started for the preliminary row over the course. It is necessary to propitiate the guardian spirits of the river, and the votive offerings are therefore to be made. At the stem of each boat crouches a man holding with outstretched arms a bunch of plantains, some cooked rice, flowers, and betel, for the soothing of the water-kelpie. This precaution must on no account be omitted. Who knows what disaster might not otherwise happen? The flouted nat might upset the craft with a flip of his finger, or cling to the keelson of the boat and tire to nothing the sinews of the brawniest arms. Therefore goodly alms are given, so that all may rest with the prowess of the rival crews. This breather serves also another purpose. It enables the spectators to have a final view of the antagonists,

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spire. To show the soles of the feet to the throne is high treason. This is awkward for the inhabitants of some quarters, for there is a rule applying to all Buddhists, that they must not place their feet towards the east, where the sun rises and whence the next Buddha, Arimadeya, will come, nor to the west, where the bawdi bin stands, or stood, the tree under which Shin Gautama attained the supreme wisdom. The superstition is probably derived from the Brahmins, who threaten grievous dangers to the man who places his feet on the shadow of a dewa, a king, a teacher, a saint, or another man's wife.

The frequent change of locality of the palace, and therefore of the capital, is a peculiarity of Burma. There are about a score of towns in the country which have been at one time or other the metropolis. Such are Tagaung, Old Pagān, and Shwebo, above Mandalay; Prome (under the title Tharekettara), Pagān, Sagaing, Ava, and Amarapura, below it. The last two are the best known; indeed some people to the present day persist in talking of the "Kingdom of Ava," though that once brilliant capital has been little better than a jungle for a great many years, and the lines of the old walls can only be traced with difficulty.

It is hardly correct to say, as most writers on Burma have hitherto done, that with a new king there should be a new capital. This has very frequently been the case, but the matter does not altogether depend upon the accession of a new sovereign. It is brought about by a very much more gruesome (the word is used advisedly) circumstance. On the foundation of a new capital, there are always a certain number of people buried alive. The idea is that they become nat-thein, that their spirits haunt the place where they were put to death, and attack all persons approaching with malevolent intentions. The notion is entirely due to the royal astrologers, the Brahmin pônnas, and as being repugnant to the tenets of Buddhism, is strenuously denounced by the true brethren of the yellow robe. But it fits in very well with the popular superstition regarding the existence of spirits, and has hence always firmly maintained its ground. It is a matter of common knowledge that this idea of

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sanctifying a building with human sacrifices is a notion which has prevailed in all parts of the world at different times, and instances of horrors of the kind are not unknown in Europe.

The virtue of the sacrifices only lasts a certain time, and when it is gone a new city should be built. There are certain signs, added to public disasters, which point out to the initiated when this alteration of site should take place. Mandalay was commenced in 1858, and two years later the seat of government was transferred from Amarapura, some five or six miles down the river. When the foundations of the city wall were laid, fifty-two persons of both sexes, and of various age and rank, were consigned to a living tomb. Three were buried under each of the twelve city gates, one at each of the four corners, one under each of the palace gates, and at the corners of the timber stockade, and four under the throne itself. The selection had to be made with care, for the victims were required to be representative people, born on special days of the week, and the boys buried were not to have any tattoo marks on them, the girls not to have their ears bored. When it was known that the troops were making the collection, no one was to be seen about the streets, except in great bands in the middle of the day. The government gave a series of magnificent dramatic performances, but no one went to see them. Eventually, however, the tale was made up, and the building went on apace. Along with the four human beings buried at the corners of the city were placed four jars full of oil, carefully covered over and protected from any damage that might come from the weight of earth pressing down upon them. These were examined every seven years by the royal astrologers, and as long as they remained intact the town was considered safe.

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At the third examination in 1880, however, it was found that the oil in two of the jars was either completely dried up or had leaked out. One was pretty far gone, and the fourth alone remained in a tolerably satisfactory state. At this very time, the January and February of 1880, a terrible scourge of smallpox was decimating the town, and two of the royal house, King Thibaw's infant son, his only child,

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and the ex-Pagān Min, the cock-fighting king, had fallen victims. This was bad enough, but other signs portending evil had happened. One of the most valued of the crown jewels, the Nansin Baddamya, had disappeared, a huge ruby, cherished as emblematic of the fortune of the dynasty since the days of Alaungpaya. A tiger in the royal gardens escaped from his cage, a most ominous circumstance, not for the poor wretch whom he killed and half ate before he could be recaptured, but for the city and the entire kingdom. The appearance of wild animals in a town is a sign that it will speedily turn to a wilderness. It was the discovery of a tiger and some deer in the environs of Amarapura which decided the fate of that "City of the Immortals." All these circumstances, coupled with the outward and visible sign of the wrath of the spirits in the shape of the plague of small-pox, decided the pônnas at once. It was no use filling the jars with oil again, or putting in fresh ones. Such parsimonious measures would be considerably worse than useless. A full conclave of the astrologers voted by a large majority for the change of the capital. This, however, neither the ministers nor Thibaw Min would hear of. Mandalay is very different from Amarapura and Ava. There are too many solid brick houses and mills and public manufactories —none of them working, it is true, but too costly to be abandoned—in the present capital to admit of its being thrown over in the old casual way, when a royal order forced everybody to migrate, on pain of imprisonment or death. The pônnas therefore held another meeting, and it was decided that the only other alternative was the offering of propitiatory sacrifices. At the instance of the Pônna Wun, a truculent old villain, it was resolved that the number should be the highest possible: a hundred men, a hundred women, a hundred boys, a hundred girls, a hundred soldiers, and a hundred foreigners. This the king agreed to, and a royal mandate was signed, and arrests forthwith commenced. A frightful panic spread in Mandalay after the first day. Every steamer leaving the capital was crowded to suffocation, boats went down the river in dozens, and there seemed very possibility that Mandalay would be deserted. Then the ministers took fright at the indignation which the

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644 631 782 announced massacres caused in England, and the whole thing was countermanded and denied. But upwards of a hundred people had been arrested, and some of these, when liberated months afterwards, declared that in the dark nights of terror, when no one ventured about Mandalay streets, people were buried under each of the posts at the twelve gates, as a compromise between the fear of the spirits and the fear that the English troops would cross the frontier. 644 787 Each of these posts bears an image of an animal from one of the seals of the king, and before the post sits a figure of a bilu, with a thick club, to act as watchman, in case the human guard should go to sleep. As Burman sentries generally sleep sounder than other people, the propitiation of these spirits at any rate was a very imperative precaution. Whether the oil-jars were filled and reburied *alone* is a dark mystery. But the smallpox left Mandalay, and the place is as happy as ever it was, which, however, is not saying much.

644 361 177·36 The British town of Mandalay is very different from that described. The Palace stockade has gone, and with it very many of the suites of apartments, notably in the women's quarter. The Hall of Audience for a time was converted into a Tamil Mission chapel; the Hlutdaw into a hideous collection of clerks' offices. This has been changed owing to the indignant protests of English visitors. Most of the Palace Halls are now empty: even the Upper Burma Club has been turned out.

The old City has now become cantonments with a few scattered barracks, officers' quarters, and wide stretches of grass. What formerly constituted the suburbs is now Mandalay town. The former execrable roads are now among the best in Burma. But many of the notable buildings, the elaborate monasteries, and gilt shrines have been burnt. Mandalay is certainly a dwindling town; the only question is how long it will remain the second town in Burma.

goes on throughout the morning. About 2 P.M. a monk gives a sermon and recites prayers. One of the elders reads aloud to the assemblage an account of the expenditures for the gifts to the monks, concluding the event. 796 735

Animistic and Magical Beliefs

Underlying the elaborate organization and practice of Buddhism, there is a considerable belief in nats, or spirits, and magic. Spirit worship, supposedly contrary to the teachings of Buddhism and opposed by the monks, is indulged in to varying degrees by the villagers. In Tadagale one frequently comes upon small wooden box-like structures affixed to trees, on which there is usually a little food and perhaps a flower as offerings to a particular nat. There seems little doubt that animism was even more important among the Burmese prior to the coming of Buddhism centuries ago. As noted in the description of initiation and wedding ceremonies earlier, nat worship has become interwoven with Buddhist beliefs and practices. It is also manifested in beliefs concerning guardian spirits of houses and particular places and in theories of the causes of many illnesses, including bewitchment and mental disturbances. Mediums, specially versed in the ways of the nats and possessing knowledge of cures for spirit-caused maladies, may be called upon for assistance. 776 755 782

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CHAPTER XII

PRAYER

'What is there that can justify tears and lamentations?'
Saying of the Buddha.

782 [345] DOWN below my house, in a grove of palms near the river, was a little rest-house. It was but a roof and a floor of teak boarding without any walls, and it was plainly built. It might have held, perhaps, twenty people; and here, as I strolled past in the evening when the sun was setting, I would see two or three old men sitting with beads in their hands. They were making their devotions, saying to themselves that the world was all trouble, all weariness, and that there was no rest anywhere except in observing the laws of righteousness. It was very pathetic, I thought, to see them there, saying this over and over again, as they told their beads through their withered fingers, for surely there was no necessity for them to learn it. Has not everyone learnt it, this, the first truth of Buddhism, long before his hair is gray, before his hands are shaking, before his teeth are gone? But there they would sit, evening after evening, thinking of the change

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782 about to come upon them soon, realizing the emptiness of life, wishing for the Great Peace.

On Sundays the rest-house, like many others round the village, was crowded. Old men there would be, and one or two young men, a few [792] children, and many women. Early in the morning they would come, and a monk would come down from the monastery near by, and each one would vow, with the monk as witness, that he or she would spend the day in meditation and in holy thought, would banish all thought of evil, and be for the day at least holy. And then, the vow made, the devotee would go and sit in the rest-house and meditate. The village is not very near; the sounds come very softly through the trees, not enough to disturb the mind; only there is the sigh of the wind wandering amid the leaves, and the occasional cry of birds. Once before noon a meal will be eaten, either food brought with them cold, or a simple pot of rice boiled beside the rest-house, and there they will stay till the sun sets and darkness is gathering about the foot of the trees. There is no service [792] at all. The monk may come and read part of the sacred books—some of the Abidama, or a sermon from the Thoots—and perhaps sometimes he may expound a little; that is all. There is nothing akin to our ideas of worship. For consider what our service consists of: there is thanksgiving and praise, there is prayer, there is reading of the Bible, there is a sermon. Our thanksgiving and praise is rendered to God for things He has done, the pleasure that He has allowed us to enjoy, the punishment that He might have inflicted upon us and has not. Our

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782 prayer is to Him to preserve us in future, to assist us in our troubles, to give us our daily food, not to be too severe upon us, not to punish us as we deserve, but to be merciful and kind. We ask Him to protect us from our enemies, not to allow them to triumph over us, but to give us triumph over them.

782 But the Buddhist has far other thoughts than
772 these. He believes that the world is ruled by everlasting, unchangeable laws of righteousness. The great God lives far behind His laws, and they are for ever and ever. You cannot change the laws of righteousness by praising them, or by crying against them, any more than you can change the revolution of the earth. Sin begets sorrow, sorrow is the only purifier from sin; these are eternal sequences; they cannot be altered; it would not be good that they should be altered. The Buddhist believes that the sequences are founded on righteousness, are the path to righteousness, and he does not believe he could alter them for the better, even if he had the power by prayer to do so. He believes in the everlasting *righteousness*, that all things work for *good* in the end; he has no need for prayer or praise; he thinks that the world is governed with far greater wisdom than any of his—perfect wisdom, that is too great, too wonderful, for his petty praise.

God lives far behind His laws; think not He has made them so badly as to require continual rectification at the prayer of man. Think not that God is not bound by His own laws. The Buddhist will never believe that God can break His own laws; that He is like an earthly king who imagines one

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code of morality for his subjects and another for himself. Not so; the great laws are founded in righteousness, so the Buddhist believes, in everlasting righteousness; they are perfect, far beyond our comprehension; they are the eternal, unchangeable, marvellous will of God, and it is our duty not to be for ever fretfully trying to change them, but to be trying to understand them. That is the Buddhist belief in the meaning of religion, and in the laws of righteousness; that is, he believes the duty of him who would follow religion to be to try to understand these laws, to bring them home to the heart, so to order life as to bring it into harmony with righteousness.

Now see the difference. We believe that the world is governed not by eternal laws, but by a changeable and continually changing God, and that it is our duty to try and persuade Him to make it better.

We believe, really, that we know a great deal better than God what is good, not only for us, but for others; we do not believe His will is always righteous—not at all: God has wrath to be deprecated; He has mercy to be aroused; He has partiality to be turned towards us, and hence our prayers.

But to the Buddhist the whole world is ruled by righteousness, the same for all, the same for ever, and the only sin is ignorance of these laws.

The Buddha is he who has found for us the light to see these laws, and to order our life in accordance with them.

So it will be understood, I think, why there is no

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782 prayer, no gathering together for any ceremonial, in
772 Buddhism; why there is no praise, no thanksgiving of any kind; why it is so very different in this way from our faith. Buddhism is a wisdom, a seeking of the light, a following of the light, each man as best he can, and it has very little to correspond with our prayer, our services of praise, our meetings together in the name of Christ.

Therefore, when you see a man kneeling before a pagoda, moving silent lips of prayer, when you see the people sitting quietly in the rest-houses on a Sunday, when you see the old men telling their beads to themselves slowly and sadly, when you hear the resonant chant of monks and children, lending a soul to the silence of the gloaming, you will know what they are doing. They are trying to understand and bring home to themselves the eternal laws of righteousness; they are honouring their great teacher.

This is all that there is; this is the meaning of all that you see and hear. The Buddhist praises and honours the Buddha, the Indian prince who so long ago went out into the wilderness to search for truth, and after many years found it in his own heart; he reverences the Buddha for seeing the light; he thanks the Buddha for his toil and exertion in making this light known to all men. It can do the Buddha no good, all this praise, for he has come to his eternal peace; but it can arouse the enthusiasm of the follower, can bring into his heart love for the memory of the great teacher, and a firm resolve to follow his teaching.

The service of his religion is to try and follow

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782 these laws, to take them home into the heart, that
772 the follower, too, may come soon into the Great Peace.

This has been called a pessimism. Surely it is the greatest optimism the world has known—this certainty that the world is ruled by righteousness, that the world has been, that the world will always be, ruled by perfect righteousness.

To the Buddhist this is a certainty. The laws are laws of righteousness, if man would but see, would but understand. Do not complain and cry and pray, but open your eyes and see. The light is all about you, if you would only cast the bandage from your eyes and look. It is so wonderful, so beautiful, far beyond what any man has dreamt of, has prayed for, and it is for ever and for ever.

This is the attitude of Buddhism towards prayer, towards thanksgiving. It considers them an impertinence and a foolishness, born of ignorance, akin to the action of him who would daily desire Atlas not to allow the heavens to drop upon the earth.

The world is ruled by laws, and these laws are laws of righteousness.

And yet, and yet.

782 I remember standing once on the platform of a famous pagoda, the golden spire rising before us, and carved shrines around us, and seeing a woman lying there, her face to the pagoda. She was praying fervently, so fervently that her words could be heard, for she had no care for anyone about, in such trouble was she; and what she was asking was this, that her child, her baby, might not die. She held

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the little thing in her arms, and as she looked upon it her eyes were full of tears. For it was very sick; its little limbs were but thin bones, with big knees and elbows, and its face was very wan. It could not even take any interest in the wonderful sights around, but hardly opened its careworn eyes now and then to blink upon the world.

'Let him recover, let him be well once more!' the woman cried, again and again.

Whom was she beseeching? I do not know.

'Thakin, there will be Someone, Someone. A Spirit may hear. Who can tell? Surely someone will help me? Men would help me if they could, but they cannot; surely there will be someone?'

So she did not remember the story of Ma Pa Da.

Women often pray, I think—they pray that their husbands and those they love may be well. It is a frequent ending to a girl's letter to her lover: 'And I pray always that you may be well.' I never heard of their praying for anything but this: that they may be loved, and those they love may be well. Nothing else is worth praying for besides this. The queen would pray at the pagoda in the palace morning and evening. 'What did she pray for?' 'What should she pray for, thakin? Surely she prayed that her husband might be true to her, and that her children might live and be strong. That is what women pray for. Do you think a queen would pray differently to any other woman?'

'Women,' say the Buddhist monks, 'never understand. They *will* not understand; they cannot learn.' And so we say that most women must be

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born again, as men, before they can see the light and understand the laws of righteousness.'

What do women care for laws of righteousness? What do they care for justice? What for the everlasting sequences that govern the world? Would not they involve all other men, all earth and heaven, in bottomless chaos, to save one heart they loved? That is woman's religion.

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778 again, the river giving back to them what it had refused to us, and they took and hung it where it used to be. There it is now, and you may hear it when you go, giving out a long, deep note, the beat of the pagoda's heart.

There are many trees, too, about the pagoda platform—so many, that seen far off you can only see the trees and the pagoda towering above them. Have not trees been always sacred things? Have not all religions been glad to give their fanes the glory and majesty of great trees?

You may look from the pagoda platform over the whole country, over the city and the river and the straight streets; and on the other side you may see the long white lakes and little hills covered with trees. It is a very beautiful place, this pagoda, and it is steeped in an odour of holiness, the perfume of the thousand thousand prayers that have been prayed there, of the thousand thousand holy thoughts that have been thought there.

778 782 The pagoda platform is always full of people kneeling, saying over and over the great precepts of their faith, trying to bring into their hearts the meaning of the teaching of him of whom this wonderful pagoda represents the tomb. There are always monks there passing to and fro, or standing leaning on the pillars of the shrines; there are always a crowd of people climbing up and down the long steps that lead from the road below. It is a place I always go to when I am in Rangoon; for, besides its beauty, there are the people; and if you go and stand near where the stairway reaches the platform you will see the people come up

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They come up singly, in twos, in groups. First a nun, perhaps, walking very softly, clad in her white dress with her beads about her neck, and there in a corner by a little shrine she will spread a cloth upon the hard stones and kneel and bow her face to the great pagoda. And then she will repeat, 'Sorrow, misery, trouble,' over and over again, running her beads through her fingers, repeating the words in the hope that in the end she may understand whither they should lead her. 'Sorrow, misery, trouble'—ah! surely she must know what they mean, or she would not be a nun. And then comes a young man, and after a reverence to the pagoda he goes wandering round, looking for someone, maybe; and then comes an old man with his son. They stop at the little stalls on the stairs, and they have bought there each a candle. The old man has a plain taper, but the little lad must have one with his emblem on it. Each day has its own sign, a tiger for Monday, and so on, and the lad buys a candle like a little rat, for his birthday is Friday, and the father and son go on to the platform. And there they kneel down side by side, the old man and the little chubby lad, and they, too, say that all is misery and delusion. And then they rise and advance to the pagoda's golden base, and put their candles thereon and light them. This side of the pagoda is in shadow now, and so you can see the lights of the candles as little stars.

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And then come three girls, sisters, perhaps, all so prettily dressed, with meek eyes, and they, too, buy candles; they, too, kneel and say their prayers, for long, so long, that you wonder if anything has

778 happened, if there has been any trouble that has
● 782 brought them thus in the sunset to the remembrance of religion. But at last they rise, and they light their little candles near by where the old man and the boy have lit theirs, and then they go away. They are so sad, they keep their faces so turned upon the ground, that you fear there has been something, some trouble come upon them. You feel so sorry for them, you would like to ask them what it all is; you would like to help them if you could. But you can do nothing. They go away down the steps, and you hear the nun repeating always, 'Sorrow, misery, trouble.'

So they come and go.

796 But on the festival days at the end of Lent it is
778 far more wonderful. Then for units there are tens, for tens there are hundreds—all come to do reverence to the great teacher at this his great holy place. There is no especial ceremony, no great service, such as we are accustomed to on our festivals. Only there will be many offerings; there will be a procession, maybe, with offerings to the pagoda, with offerings to the monks; there will be much gold-leaf spread upon the pagoda sides; there will be many people kneeling there—that is all. For Buddhism is not an affair of a community, but of each man's own heart.

To see the great pagoda on the festival days is one of the sights of the world. There are a great crowd of people coming and going, climbing up the steps. There are all sorts of people, rich and poor, old and young. Old men there are, climbing wearily up these steps that are so steep, steps that lead

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562 775 cation is a very long process; but they have entered into the path, they have seen the light, if it be even a long way off yet. They know whither they would go. But women, see how few become nuns! Only those who have suffered such shipwreck in life that this world holds nothing more for them worth having become nuns. And they are very few. For a hundred monks there is not one nun. Women are too attached to their home, to their fathers, their husbands, their children, to enter into the holy life; and, therefore, how shall they come to heaven except they return as men? Our teacher says nothing about it, but we have eyes, and we can see.'

562 792 All this is true. Women have no desire for the holy life. They cannot tear themselves away from their home-life. If their passions are less than those of men, they have even less command over them than men have. Only the profoundest despair will drive a woman to a renunciation of the world. If on an average their lives are purer than those of men, they cannot rise to the heights to which men can. How many monks there are—how few nuns! Not one to a hundred.

562 782 Yet in some ways women are far more religious than men. If you go to the golden pagoda on the hilltop and count the people kneeling there doing honour to the teacher, you will find they are nearly all women. If you go to the rest-houses by the monastery, where the monks recite the law on Sundays, you will find that the congregations are nearly all women. If you visit the monastery without the gate you will see many visitors bringing little presents, and they will be women.

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'Thakin, many men do not care for religion at all, but when a man does do so, he takes it very seriously. He follows it out to the end. He becomes a monk, and surrenders the whole world. But with women it is different. Many women, nearly all women, will like religion, and none will take it seriously. We mix it up with our home-life, and our affections, and our worldly doings; for we like a little of everything.' So said a woman to me.

Is this always true? I do not know, but it is very true in Burma. Nearly all the women are religious, they like to go to the monastery and hear the law, they like to give presents to the monks, they like to visit the pagoda and adore Gaudama the Buddha. I am sure that if it were not for their influence the laws against taking life and against intoxicants would not be observed as stringently as they are. So far they will go. As far as they can use the precepts of religion and retain their home-life they will do so; as it was with Yathodaya so long ago, so it is now. But when religion calls them and says, 'Come away from the world, leave all that you love, all that your heart holds good, for it is naught; see the light, and prepare your soul for peace,' they hold back. This they cannot do; it is far beyond them. 'Thakin, we *cannot do so.* It would seem to us terrible,' that is what they say.

A man who renounces the world is called 'the great glory,' but not so a woman.

I have said that the Buddhist religion holds men and women as equal. If women cannot observe its laws as men do, it is surely their own fault if they be held the less worthy.

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776 626 from enemies, as witness my companion, who had been shot at times without number and had only once been hit in the leg, but you cannot escape Nats. Once, he told me, there were two very sacrilegious men, hunters by profession, only more abandoned than even the majority of hunters, and they went into this wood to hunt. 'They didn't care for Nats,' they said. They didn't care for anything at all apparently. 'They were absolutely without reverence, worse than any beast,' said my companion.

So they went into the wood to shoot, and they never came out again. A few days later their bare bones were found, flung out upon the road near the enchanted wood. The Nats did not care to have even the bones of such scoundrels in their wood, and so thrust them out. That was what happened to them, and that was what might happen to us if we went in there. We did not go.

Though the Nats of the forest will not allow even one of their beasts to be slain, the Nats of the rivers are not so exclusive. I do not think fish are ever regarded in quite the same light as animals. It is true that a fervent Buddhist will not kill even a fish, but a fisherman is not quite such a reprobate as a hunter in popular estimation. [782] And the Nats think so, too, for the Nat of a pool will not forbid all fishing. You must give him his share; you must be respectful to him, and not offend him; and then he will fill your nets with gleaming fish, and all will go well with you. If not, of course, you will come to grief; your nets will be torn, and your boat upset; and finally, if obstinate, you will be drowned. A

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great arm will seize you, and you will be pulled under and disappear for ever.

A Nat is much like a human being; if you treat him well he will treat you well, and conversely. Courtesy is never wasted on men or Nats, at least so a Burman tells me.

The highest Nats live in the mountains. The higher the Nat the higher the mountain; and when you get to a very high peak indeed, like Mainthong Peak in Wuntho, you encounter very powerful Nats.

They tell a story of Mainthong Peak and the Nats there, how all of a sudden, one day in 1885, strange noises came from the hill. High up on his mighty side was heard the sound of great guns firing slowly and continuously; there was the thunder of falling rocks, cries as of someone bewailing a terrible calamity, and voices calling from the precipices. The people living in their little hamlets about his feet were terrified. Something they knew had happened of most dire import to them, some catastrophe which they were powerless to prevent, which they could not even guess. But when a few weeks later there came even into those remote villages the news of the fall of Mandalay, of the surrender of the king, of the 'great treachery,' they knew that this was what the Nats had been sorrowing over. All the Nats everywhere seem to have been distressed at our arrival, to hate our presence, and to earnestly desire our absence. They are the spirits of the country and of the people, and they cannot abide a foreign domination.

But the greatest place for Nats is the Popa Mountain, which is an extinct volcano standing all

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776 alone about midway between the river and the Shan
823 Mountains. It is thus very conspicuous, having no hills near it to share its majesty; and being in sight from all the old capitals, it is very well known in history and legend. It is covered with dense forest, and the villages close about are few. At the top there is a crater with a broken side, and a stream comes flowing out of this break down the mountain. Probably it was the denseness of its forests, the abundance of water, and its central position, more
[519] than its guardian Nats, that made it for so many years the last retreating-place of the half-robber, half-patriot bands that made life so uneasy for us. But the Nats of Popa Mountains are very famous.

776 When any foreigner was taken into the service
695 of the King of Burma he had to swear an oath of
823 fidelity. He swore upon many things, and among them were included 'all the Nats in Popa.' No Burman would have dared to break an oath sworn in such a serious way as this, and they did not imagine that anyone else would. It was and is a very dangerous thing to offend the Popa Nats; for they are still there in the mountain, and everyone who goes there must do them reverence.

776 A friend of mine, a police officer who was en-
823 gaged in trying to catch the last of the robber chiefs
[782] who hid near Popa, told me that when he went up the mountain shooting, he, too, had to make offerings. Some way up there is a little valley dark with overhanging trees, and a stream flows slowly along it. It is an enchanted valley, and if you look closely you will see that the stream is not as other streams, for it flows uphill. It comes rushing into

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spoke. He said that if any Nats lived in the tree, they should speak to him and tell him what they wanted. 'It is not fit,' he said, 'for great Nats to terrify the poor villagers at the landing-place. Let the Nats speak and say what they require. All that they want shall be given.' And the Nats spake and said that they wanted a place to live in where they could be at peace, and the monk answered for the governor that all his land was at their disposal. 'Let the Nats choose,' he said; 'all the country is before them.' So the Nats chose, and said that they would have Popa Mountain, and the monk agreed.

The Nats then left the tree and went away, far away inland, to the great Popa Mountain, and took up their abode there, and all the people there feared and reverenced them, and even made to their honour two statues with golden heads and set them up on the mountain.

This is the story of the Popa Nats, the greatest Nats of all the country of Burma, the guardian spirits of the mysterious mountain. The golden heads of the statues are now in one of our treasuries, put there for safe custody during the troubles, though it is doubtful if even then anyone would have dared to steal them, so greatly are the Nats feared. And the hunters and the travellers there must offer to the Nats little offerings, if they would be safe in these forests, and even the young man must obtain permission from the Nats before he marry.

I think these stories that I have told, stories selected from very many that I have heard, will show what sort of spirits these are that the Burmese

cloth, small enough to keep mosquitos out. The other kind was made of plain cloth to keep out the smallest insects. The nets are rectangular for a single bed, square for a double. They are suspended over the bed on a wooden framework and tucked under the mattress. Pathwe: three were used by the family and two kept in reserve. Each lasted 4 or 5 years. The reserve nets cost Rs. 60/- each, the others Rs. 40/- or 45/- each. Camp: one old one was brought from Pathwe, this is used by U Myaing and his wife. The rest of the family have none. Two are desired.

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TA-BYET-SHE, broom: The hand broom is used to brush out dust and dirt from the floor of the house. It is about 2 feet long, 2 inches in diameter and consists of bent over by inches of stiff reeds bound at the top by a more flexible reed strip. The one used in camp cost 12 annas in Rangoon.

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Burmese Concepts about the Home.

The following Burmese ideas about the home were secured mainly from Ko Maung Than, my research assistant.

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The Burmese regard the KIN-ZAR (home place) with great love, and as the most essential feature of life. The head of a family will frequently admonish: "My young ones let us remain with our nest intact and our eggs uncracked", this is also a common prayer. The ideal is to preserve the family home with necessary repairs in its original form. Wooden (teak) houses are preferred to bamboo. The husband and wife are partners in the ownership of the home which they start at marriage. Indeed, the word for "marriage" KIN-DAUNG-PYU (Home-separately-build) emphasizes the importance of building a home upon starting a family. In villages the mother and children spend almost all of their time in and around the home. Since the Burmese are especially sedentary, short journeys being unusual and infrequent events, the house is the spot where he lives and dies. It is furthermore his "castle" and place of security within which he is "ruler".

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Each house is under the direct protection of MIN MAHA-GIRI one of the 37 major nats of Burma. He controls the fortunes of the family and in return is revered. A coconut, the symbol of MIN-

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342 776 782 MAHA-GIRI, is found in nearly every house (a junior member of a family need revere only the symbol of the senior member of a family). A dried coconut with attachment stems is placed in a basket, the top wrapped with a KAUNG-BONG (Head-wrap) of red and white cloth streamers and the basket hung on a nail to the primary corner post of the house. It must be adjusted correctly, and periodically sprinkled with sandlewood water. An interesting story explains the use of the coconut symbol.

713 MAUNG TIN DE, a blacksmith of great powers had two beautiful sisters who he feared would be coveted by the king of the city in which they lived. He asked them for this reason to remain in seclusion. One day he returned from work to find them gone. He became very angry and pounded his anvil till the city shook and the people suffered from earache. For a while he eluded persuit but was finally caught and burned to death. Afterwards he became a powerful nat called MIN MAHA-GIRI with powers of protecting households. Since the coconut signifies coolness and thirst-quenching it came to be offered to the nat who had died from fire.

MIN MAHA-GIRI is consulted if sickness or other misfortunes visit the family. At such times the head of the family checks the coconut offering to make sure it is in good condition. If not this is remedied for much misfortune could be the result of MIN MAHA-GIRI's displeasure at being neglected. When a journey is contemplated he is also appealed to for protection. A lesser nat YON GIN O is in charge of the kitchen and more specifically the hearth. Ko Maung Than knew little of this [563] nat since it is of minor importance or not considered in Mon households.

342 [788] [574] The home is very important as a place for socio-religious functions many ceremonies involving groups of people are observed or in part take place in the house (see below in socio-religious section). Social visiting is also common and much enjoyed. Hospitality, related to but differentiated from charity, gains merit for the host. There is a saying that visitors "come only when the home is pleasant."

512 805 513 The home, of course, performs a major "function" as a sleeping place, and there are many beliefs and observances in connection with sleep. The evening hours are divided into LU NYAT THET SEIK (children

quiet), the time when the children become quiet from 7 to 8. 9 to 10 p.m. is known as THATKYI-KAUNG-CHA (oldage-head-drop) when the elders begin to nod; from 11 to midnight and beyond is LUKLIN-PYAN CHAIN (Bachelors'-return-time) when young men complete their carousing and return to sleep. ATO (dawn) comes at the second cocks'crowing (first is at mid-night) about 4 o'clock. The KALA-DET (Indians-marching in) hollow wooden drum is struck in the phongyi-kyaungs at this time to awaken the village. The women who prepare breakfast, and the old folks who rise to worship appear at this time - but others may sleep on for an hour or so.

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It is obligatary to wash the legs and feet before retiring. In warm weather a mat is preferred for coolness - but in colder and damp weather a mattress is considered necessary for protection. Prayers taking from 2 minutes (most) up to considerably longer are generally said before bed-time. These praise Buddha and include such supplications as "may I be lifted up to heaven soon." Dreams may be good or bad according to the disposition of the mate. Certain dreams have meanings applicable as omens. It is during sleep that the ghost of a recently departed loved one contacts the sleeper and, sometimes, succeeds in luring him away permanently.

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Analysis of home standard in Pathwe and in Refugee Camp.

The Pathwe home was in nearly every way superior to refugee camp home. Let us examine the nature of this superiority and attempt to see the adjustment which U Myaing made in the refugee camp. The Pathwe home was an independent unit as compared to the refugee camp apartment-like home. However we may not assume that U Myaing found this a disadvantage, since living in Pantanaw was "close". The quarters in the one case were separated by half a dozen feet and on the other by a bamboo partition. An important difference is that the Pathwe home was owned by U Myaing and he had inalienable rights there, whereas the refugee camp apartment was loaned to him for a short time period.

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Only about one fiftieth of the space was available in the refugee camp (15,050 cubic feet in Pathwe, 315 cubic feet in camp.) However,

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Nats' powers for good include protecting the village from dacoit attacks but does not extend to modern warfare. When the Japanese armies were slicing up through Tenasserim in 1941, the elders of Maung Maung Than's village prayed for nat protection against the invaders. The nats replied "Dear Villagers-we-ourselves are wearing raised longyis in this crisis (ready to run)." This is a Rangoon town joke told among the sophisticated collegiates at the University. Not so well defined, but still sensed is a growing distrust of the powers of nats to combat modern evils.

The nats can best be visualized as supernatural despots each with his province (the home, village, sea, babies) and each exacting tribute of periodic or constant attention in the form of flowers or food, red and white cloth strips, and an altar which may have the image of the nat carved in wood (or moulded in modern plasticene). Banyan trees with their multiple, snake-like trunks, are the most common places of abode. When disaster in the form of sickness or other ill fortune strikes, the nats are appeased with offerings immediately. The SAY SAYA will frequently check with the family of his patient to make sure this has been done. In Rangoon and elsewhere, business men whose fortunes have been good are the main supporters of the nat festivals which are given for the entertainment of all the nats once a year in October, for a seven day period. NAT KADAW (nat-wives) are the mediums who contact the nats by becoming possessed by them at this festival and other special occasions (for a single nat) throughout the year. These are married women or more rarely homosexuals who dance, answer questions and give opinions when possessed.

Punishment for offense against the nats is first shown by accidents or sudden illnesses like paralysis meted out to the offender. If the offender continues the village as a whole will gradually be afflicted. For example, when a drunkard offends the nats with blasphemous language evil falls on the entire village. Villagers led by the elders and a prominent NAT-KADAW go in a body to the major banyan tree shrine to have an understanding with the offended nats. Offerings are given and attention of the nats called to the woes of

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776 of the villagers. The head-nat, the guardian of the village, replies
753 with accusations that "the whole village has forgotten me", boasts of
688 his powers to punish and is finally molified. In Rangoon there are
672 professional nat-givers who parade the streets with a cart bearing the
●782 image of "the conquerer of the salty waters" (special nat of entrepre-
[463] neurs). For a few annas he will make offerings to the nat and relcive the busy townspeople of this task.

776 The arrangement is a mutual one where the people enjoy freedom
782 from oppressions in return for certain concessions. This phenomenon closely parallels the traditional relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Burma. In a real sense the nat concept serves the function of allowing the Burmese a sense of control over catastrophic forces which do not fall into any other system (as secular, political,
[177] personal relationships, cosmology.). It is this system of controls that the western scientific system most immediately competes with. The administrative and entrepreneur class of Burmese especially in Rangoon say they "Do not believe" in nats. But it is usual for most individuals no matter what their western background to apply to nats in cases of ill fortune "just in case".

775 THAYEN (Ghosts) generally are a group of supernatural spirits closely related to nats in their origins but with a different set of properties. These are "recently" deceased individuals whose crimes and sins while on earth or manner of death condemn them to an eternity of wandering and mischief-making. Actually, each person becomes a ghost at death but is ordinarily released from earth at the moment of the interment of the corpse for judgement in heaven. Those who die of
[761] "raw death" become ghosts. These include: death in childbirth, by wild animals (especially tigers), instant deaths by dahs as in warfare, or by hanging. In Maung Maung Than's village a prominent ghost is U Ne Gyi (Mr. Blacky) a very sinful fellow who lived 50 or 60 years ago in the village. His complexion is quite black and horribly distorted. He inhabits a banyan tree and specialises in causing infant illness. Offerings of rice at the tree pacifies him. Ghosts are forces for evil only - evil of the more irritating and less important kind.
751 Older people wear red and white coloured strings about their necks as a protection against ghost evils. It is very common to wear a LET-PWET

don't usually talk about these things with them. We invite the phongyis and worship them. We don't talk much with them. They preach the law and the 5 SILAS to us. 181 203

16. Q. Are there any persons of influence in camp who give advise on everyday living? 621

A. Yes, the person of influence is the schoolmaster, U Khant. But he only teaches the children and looks to the general cleanliness of the camp. Another person is the man who teaches the English. But they do not lay down what is right and what is wrong.

Activities of the Family in Relationship to the Supernatural.

The main forces which U Myaing and his family are concerned with 771 are those of the Nats and those of Buddhism. Speaking historically, the Nats seem to represent a remnant of an early form of animism in which the Nats were tree or nature spirits. It is interesting to note the manner in which U Myaing blends the two religious systems. The Nats control earthly happenings, and the Buddhist structure the eternal. We are concerned with identifying some of the major practices, but primarily with the differentiation between religious practices in [178] Pantanaw and in the refugee camp.

Nats.

The problem of the Nats come up in our study by the appearance of 776 a bamboo pole split so as to form a small basket at one end. This 782● object, called a KYAUNG ZAUNG rested on the roof of the camp hut next to U Myaing's. An interview in which Daw Aw Zar (.D.A.Z.) and U Myaing (U.M.) discussed Nats, is given in its entirety below because it reveals the rather vague feelings of "superstition" held of the Nats on the one hand and their potency on the other.

Q. No. 25 (photograph) is a split bamboo pole with a basket at the top. What is this called and what is it used for?

A. (D.A.Z.) KYAUNG ZAUNG. The thing he took from the roof and photographed? It is called a KYAUNG ZAUNG.
(U.M.) It is called KYAUNG ZAUNG.

Q. How do you use it ?

A. (D.A.Z.) We offer to U SHIN GYI and others. Offerings to Nats. Didn't you hear that big man speak? (To U Myaing).

Q. Who made this object? Who makes them?

A. (D.A.Z.) The people who give the offerings of course.

Q. Do you have to make these when you give offerings?

A. If we give offerings we make them.

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Q. Don't you buy them?

A. We don't have to buy the bamboo and we know how to make it ourselves.

Q. (D.A.Z) Everyone around can come and make use of it when one has been made.

Q. Is there one for each household or for four or five households?

A. Whoever likes to give offerings comes and takes it and makes use of it.

63. Q. What offerings are put in these split bamboos?

A. (U.M. in aside) Include everything.
(D.A.Z.) You tell them. I don't know how to.

A. (U.M.) KAUKSNYIN (Black rice) after it is prepared, coconuts, jaggery, Burmese tea leaves, betel quids.... these are offered to the nats.
(D.A.Z.) Fire sticks. Fire.
(U.M.) Fire is lighted and placed with the offerings.

Q. Are these candles or oil lamps?

A. It doesn't matter which. Either will do.

Q. Are the candles lit when they are put in the basket?

A. (U.M.) Yes, they are lit.

Q. How often are the offerings made?

A. It is not like this. We give offerings when we want to. If we feel like it we might give offerings today - or we may not do so for a whole year.

Q. Can you stay without doing so?
A. We can stay.

Q. It is not compulsory?
A. (U.M.) NO. It is not. You give offerings with a purpose - to ward off danger.

64. Q. Are the offerings given in hard times - in order to get better?

A. (U.M.) It is not like this either.
(D.A.Z.) It is because of worship. When someone is slightly unwell or indisposed offerings are made.

Q. And do they then get better?

A. (D.A.Z.) Yes. So it is said. People say that they regain health.
(U.M.) They are only practicing what the elders of the past have prescribed. You can stay without giving any offering.

65. Q. Do the Nats have names? If so what are some of the names?

A. (D.A.Z.) U SHIN GYI.

Q. Are there others besides U SHIN GYI?

A. (U.M.) There are 37 nats.

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Q. This is only for U SHIN GYI? (the bamboo basket)
A. Yes. A separate offering for U SHIN GYI.
Q. You don't offer to the 37 Nats?
A. (U.M.) No, we don't.

66. Q. Is this one Nat just for fishermen or is it just one of Nats?
A. (D.A.Z.) There is no connection with fishing.
Q. (U.M.) No connection.
(D.A.Z) The whole Burmese race worships him.

67. Q. Ask U Myaing or his mother to tell me a little bit of the Nats - some of the names of the Nats, what they are like, and so forth, and why he offers only to one Nat.
A. (U.M.) We can't. Since the eldest of the past did it, we follow them in this practice. We don't know much.
Q. Why is it that you give offerings to U SHIN GYI and not to the others?
A. We are not concerned with the other Nats, and that is why we don't give offerings to them.
Q. And are you concerned with U SHIN GYI?
A. U SHIN GYI also does not concern us. But since many.....
Q. Is it that the elders in the past did not give offerings to the other Nats?
A. (D.A.Z.) Those who wanted to give offerings did so.
(U.M.) There were all kinds. People who gave offerings did so. We give only to U SHIN GYI, we also do it.
Q. Other people of the past worshipped other Nats, didn't they?
A. (U.M.) Yes. But we do not know the source, neither have we asked about them. U SHIN GYI was shown at PWES in ZAT stories. A human being was called away alive by the Nats.
(D.A.Z.) In Rangoon haven't you seen dances for the other Nats?
Q. Please tell us something more about the Nats.
A. (U.M. & D.A.Z.) We can't tell much about U SHIN GYI either we know only how to give offerings.
Q. Tell us all you know about U SHIN GYI.
A. (D.A.Z.) We give offerings. We prepare KAUKHNYIN and offer it. It keeps away danger.
Q. We are not asking about the offering but about U SHIN GYI.
A. We don't know about U SHIN GYI.
Q. How does U SHIN GYI look like? Have you ever seen him?
A. (U.M.) No, I have never seen him.

68. Q. Does U Myaing believe that the Nats control things on earth or are there some spirits with Buddhism that control things. Let me restate that question. The merit that U Myaing gets is for the future life. Is that correct?
A. (U.M. & D.A.Z.) It is for the future life of course.
Q. (D.A.Z.) Merit is for the future life.
(U.M.) The merit accumulated now cannot be seen..... meritorious acts are done so that in the next existence..
(D.A.Z.) so that we might have a long life like mine... we fast and pray. It is like this: I have lived to this age because in the past existence I prayed at pagodas, observed the 5 precepts and the 8 precepts.

69. Q. The Nats are apparently not very important then, and it is the merit that is gained in former existences that takes care of the present life?
A. (U.M.) Not important. The good in this life is because of the meritorious acts in the previous existence.
Q. And the Nats are not important in this life?
A. (D.A.Z.) No.
(U.M.) The Nats only give bad results. It is because they may work evil that offerings are made to them. We can't see them either.

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70. (D.A.Z.) They don't bring any good. You can only get food if you have done good in the previous existence in which case you will be wealthy and live long.

70. Q. What kind of misfortune do the Nats bring; he mentioned sickness - what are some of the others?

A. According to what many people say, they can cause ill health and even death - that's what they say.

Q. Do they mean to say that people are killed by the Nats?

A. (D.A.Z. & U.M.) Yes. We say that such a person has died because the Nats have caught him. That's what we mean when we say that the Nats work evil.
(U.M.) To die of drowning - that is because the Nats have been wronged; that is what most people say.
(D.A.Z.) We don't know these things very well.

71. Q. What about when the fishing is not good - the fish do not come upstream. Do the Nats have anything to do with that?

A. (U.M.) Many people say so - that the fish are said to be "lifted" or kept upstream by the Nats. We see nothing, but many people say that it is so. Acting on such talk we have to go to the Nats at the INS and give offerings of liquor, fowl curry and duck curry. According to IN custom we have to do it that way; we have to hang coconuts (on the offering place) and this is to appease the Nats who are holding up the fish, so that the fish might come downstream. When this happens, people become confirmed in their belief; when the fish don't come downstream they say, "Oh these are all lies about the Nats." They speak in this fashion.

The following information, which duplicates in part that given above, was secured at a later time.

"We give offerings only to U SHIN GYI and we do so twice a year, in the months of Waso and Thadingyut. These offerings are to keep us from harm. We do not worship other Nats because we have no family tradition of having done so. Of course, we do not have a family tradition of worshipping U SHIN GYI either, but then the whole Burmese nation worships him.

"In IN work we also give offerings to an Indian Nat who is known as KWIN BAING of Nat-Hauk IN. We give him offerings of roast chicken and liquor, black rice or KAUKHNYIN, bunches of bananas, coconuts, money, Htameins and GAUNG BAUNGS. These offerings are made only at IN time. No one bothers at other times.

"Some people even get possessed by the Nats, and then they say things like: 'The fish do not come downstream to the INS because I am preventing them. I am doing this because you do not worship me, etc.' When the people hasten to propitiate the Nat, the fish either come down to the INS or they do not. If through a coincidence the fish do come down, people come to believe in the Nat. I do not believe in them much. What I do, I do because those in the past have always done so.

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"They have no U SHIN GYI ceremonies here comparable to those we had in Pantanaw. Here they give offerings to them only in their own homes. In Pathwe, the whole village got together for the ceremony. In the month of Pyatho when the river begins to subside we start to take collections in the village. We collect only on our side of Pathwe village, which is built on the three banks at a confluence of two streams. Our side of the village contains about 250 houses, and each house-

for an adult and 8 annas for a child."

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In camp U Myaing does not play cards very much except when at funerals to pass the night away. His total stakes on such occasions are only about eight annas or a rupee. He has never been to the races, and he never goes about town for fun. He does not go visiting much except when on business. When he does go, he visits Kla Khin, his first cousin who lives in MEIN-MIN-KHET-THIT, and his cousin Ma Sein Maing who lives in Ahlone. In Rangoon there are about 40,000 to 60,000 refugees from Pantanaw district. Sometimes he visits other people whom he knew at the village. However, in a single year his purely social visits to people outside of the camp totals only three visits - one visit each to three houses.

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Dr. Orr, Dr. Sheppard, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Musgrave are the only white men he has met. He does not know any other Americans or Englishmen.

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U Myaing has not gone to the pagoda once in the present month. During the past month, when he was working at the Jubilee Hall, he used to cross the pagoda platform twice a day going to and coming from his work. In the last year he donated some money at the Shwe Dagon. He gave 2 annas on three occasions four annas on 6 occasions, and once, when he drew his monthly pay, he donated a rupee. Apart from these, he donated money 6 or 7 times during the first one or two months of their arrival, during the time when he was going around selling mats. He gave altogether three or four rupees in these six or seven times.

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Only Daw Aw Zar regularly goes to the pagoda solely for the sake of worship and prayer. Ma Aye Myaing has been there about five times on three occasions, but, they were while she was on her way elsewhere, and only once or twice purely for worship. Her total offerings amount to only about a rupee. Daw Aw Zar remarked that they would not have had the opportunity of praying at this great pagoda if they were still in Pantanaw. Daw Aw Zar gives offerings of flowers, money, candles and incense, and goes up the pagoda frequently.

In his worship, U Myaing recites the 5 SILAS. He prays for

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● 782 the well being of his family, for riches and the absence of privation and penury. He desires Nirvana. He prays that all the creatures inhabiting the 36 worlds may be infused with love for each other. [775] "Even if I change existance, may I be born into a better existence. It would not be a better existence if I were to become a cat or some other animal."

782 776 Daw Aw Zar prays that she may meet with good people and not meet up with enemies; that she may be enabled to meet the high-minded and avoid wicked people. Ma Aye Myaing's prayers are about the same as Daw Aw Zar, but she adds that she may be able to give charities liberally in this and successive existences.

In Pantanaw U Myaing prayed for the same things that he prays for now in camp. There he took life and had to expiate the demerit acquired from taking the lives of fish, with the merit accumulated through charities and other meritorious acts. He took some consolation in the fact that he did not take part personally in the killing itself but only gave directions, and even when, in those years in which he had to buy live fish from the IN workers, the fish poured into his boat died of their own accord and so no blame could be attached to him. He did not beat them to death. He believes that although fishermen have a bad reputation as people who take lives, that does not mean that the one necessarily implies the other. However, he concedes that he may be blamed for directing the killing to take place. He was not sure, and so he goes ahead with his charities.

Observations of Aspects of Life in Rangoon.

369 776 In Pathes they had pigs killed occasionally for pork but it did not greatly disturb him. The mass slaughter of pigs in Rangoon apalled him as being a very gruesome affair. Fifty to sixty animals were lined up in the slaughter house on the occasion he witnessed such a killing. The slaughterers were Chinese and they took the squealing pigs, despatched them and handed them over to others who dip them in boiling water to clean off the hair, and this happened even if the pigs were not quite dead as yet. U Myaing thinks they must be getting a lot of dement.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 190[illegible] AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

[opp. p.42]

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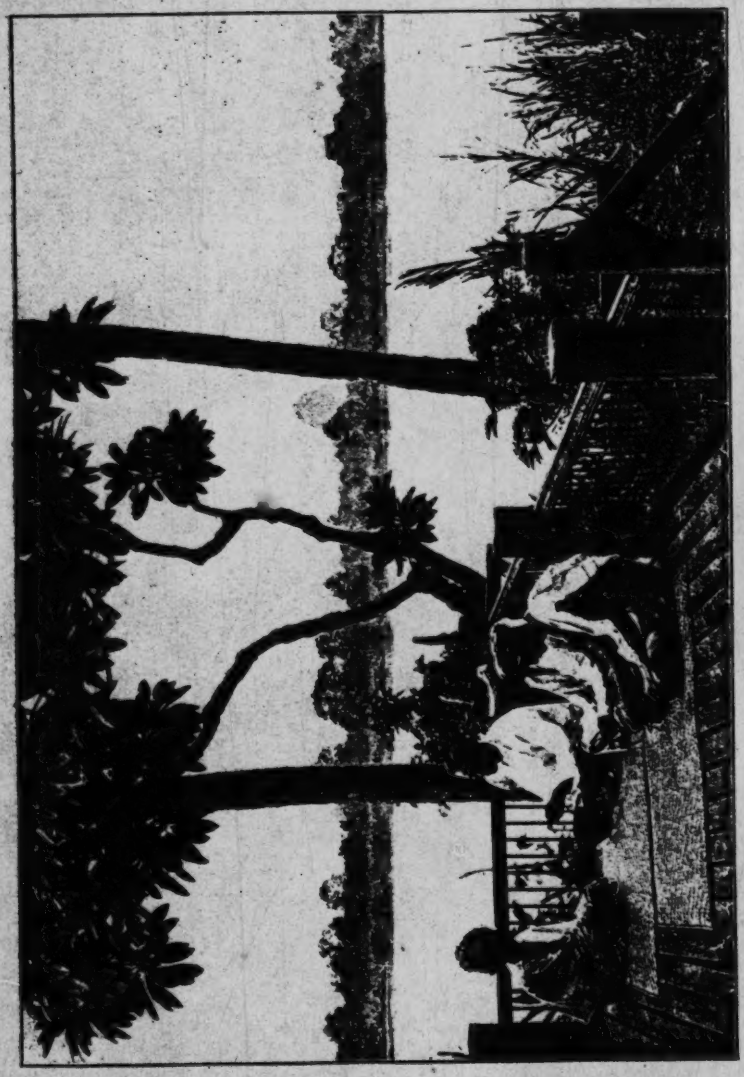
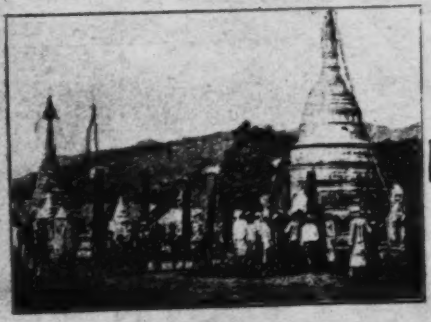


02 ELDERS KEEPING DUTY DAY.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

122. CUTTING GIANT BAMBOO (WABO).

and the roof-rafters. Straight trees are selected for posts, and are either left plain, or the sapwood is dressed off, or they are dubbed octagonal; the timbers are rough-hewn with the *dâ*. Posts of hard and durable wood (*pyinkadô*) are also squared, and the scantlings for the timbers cut with the saw. A special significance attaches to the posts of the house. It is thought unlucky if birds alight on them before they are roofed in. Sham bows and arrows are set at the heads of the posts to scare them (*hugemmana*). Besides the miniature bow-and-arrow stuck in bazár goods to scare crows, this is the only form in which the long-bow and arrow survive in Burma; in practice, arrows are used with a crossbow (No. 204) and pellets with the plain bow (*le*), and that not extensively. Another curious custom is the one of laying a piece of cloth between the head of the post and the wall-plate as a propitiation to the *nat* of the tree (p. 187). Before the large posts of temples are reared, their heads are hung with offerings, which the workpeople afterwards share among themselves. The front bays of the house have a floor only a few feet off the ground (*kyanneing*)—unless where the flood-levels require it to be higher—making a verandah, the common or unenclosed portion of the house, free to strangers. The back bays have a floor about four cubits off the ground or above the lower floor. A bamboo or wooden ladder connects the floors. The upper floor is enclosed all round, and has one or two bays partitioned off. A pent-roof covers the cooking-place and grain-bin, where the rice-pounders and implements are stored as well; or else there is a shed for



123. REARING THE POSTS OF THE WUT.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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178 SCENE IN THE PLAINS AT FLOOD-TIME.

keep the pasture green till March. By April the elephant-grass in the *Kwin* is dry and ready to burn like a prairie. Camp fires and cultivation fires spread, or the stump of a burning cheroot starts the fire, which runs through the *kaing* and the bamboo forest till it is stopped by a broad water-course. In the hot weather the thatch and bamboo of the houses are as dry as tinder, and village fires are frequent. A hook and flapper on long bamboo poles are provided at every house to tear off the thatch and beat out the fire (No. 431). Water-pots are set along the roof-ridges, so that they only need to be overturned. But if a high wind is blowing, the burning thatch is carried across streets and creeks. The people can only save their movables and accept the situation, which they do with characteristic good humour. The religious buildings being more substantial, there is a better chance of extinguishing them when on fire. Religious merit is to be gained by the effort; the whole village turns out with waterpots to quench the flames and slake the embers.

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179. THE IRAWADI AT PROME (P. 137).

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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282. PREPARING TAWTHALIN OFFERINGS (p. 188).

[782]

at the temples in the same spirit. *Thèbbnzedi* are erected on the day of a sick person's planet, and decorated with flags according to the years of age. Here Buddhism, which knows of no vicarious merit (or demerit), is tainted by a survival of animism (p. 188). The merit of the act is intended to cancel the demerit of some troubled spirit which is seeking to possess the body of the sufferer. Offerings are likewise set apart for the troubled spirit in the forest, to divert him from the sick person. When an epidemic of cholera occurs, the whole village sets up a din at sunset with bamboo sticks, to frighten the demons away. But many minds are averse to such superstitions, and they seek for natural explanations. They ascribe disease to states of the blood, to "heats" and "vapours." The cooling qualities of nitre are extolled for the one, and the cordial effects of spice for the other. Dietetic questions interest everybody, and everyone has his or her pet nostrum. Very little operative surgery is attempted as compared with India and China—merely the opening of abscesses and setting of bones. Hare-lip and cleft palate, and the cognate deformities, appear to be frequent. The dressings applied to wounds and sores are chiefly turmeric, slaked lime, *nlm*-leaves.

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Successful lithotomies and other major operations, and the boon of chloroform, have spread the fame of western surgery in a vastly wider circle than it can reach itself. The sick are tenderly nursed by the Burmans, and never abandoned in panic fear as happens in epidemics among the hill-tribes. There are few greater sources of religious merit than ministering to the sick. During the puerperium, the Burman custom is to main-

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283. BURMAN CARRIER.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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[322]

287. COUNTRY SALE-DEPOT.

about three million rupees. At present both wood-oil and crude earth-oil are being superseded by kerosene. The crude earth-oil is used for preserving woodwork. But its place is being taken by the residues from the local refineries, now established in Rangoon.* Travelling pedlars hawk the silk goods of Burma Proper and all sorts of fancy nicknacks from the sea-ports to the villages of the interior. The approaches to the temples are favourite resorts of stall-keepers of all sorts of wares, especially of wax-tapers, plain and moulded, gold leaf, coloured paper flags and flowers for the votaries to decorate the shrines with, and toys wherewith to gladden the hearts of children—an act of merit befitting the shrine of religion in this cheerful land. In sad contrast to the gaiety of the booths is the spectacle of the lepers who beg for alms. The prominence of these unfortunates at such places creates a disproportionate impression of their numbers, high as these are (p. 41). The offerings dedicated on the occasions of *Shinldung ftes*, festivals, and funerals, make the trades of manufacturing and distributing the requisites of the *kyaung* very important ones. The wares collected in the *parĕikaya* shop used to be representative of the manufactures of Burma. But of late, imported goods—crockery, glassware, lamps and clocks—have become a regular part of the *kyaung* furniture, and are offered in meaningless profusion. This has helped to bring the *parĕikaya* trade into the hands of foreigners.

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288. ROLLING CHEROOTS.

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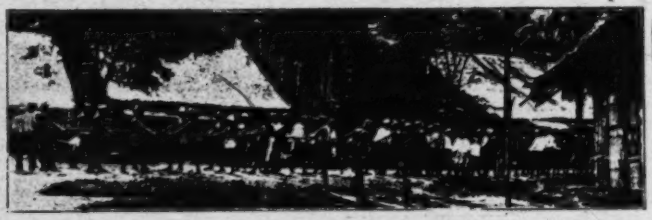
Every year, after the floods have subsided, Burman dealers establish dry-

* See *The Occurrence of Petroleum in Burma*, by Dr. F. Noetling.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

balloons are sent off, and the rivers are illuminated with rafts carrying lamps which are set adrift. Labyrinths of bamboo are erected round the *zedi*, which entertain the children and especially the hill-people, who pique themselves, not



416. NEW-YEAR TUG-OF-WAR.

without reason, on their sense of locality. These labyrinths are called *Wingabá*, after the mountain maze, to which Prince Wéthandayá was banished by his father, in the *zát* legend.

Tazáung-mòn is the next festival after *Thadíndyút*; it is kept in Pegu, but not in Burma Proper. At this season Buddhists commemorate the miraculous journey of Gawdama Buddha to the *nat* country after the death of his mother, to impart to her the enlightenment which had come to him on earth, and by means of which he had attained peace. Spires of bamboo-work and tinsel—the *tazáung-daing*—are built twenty to fifty feet high, as symbols of the stair by which Gawdama ascended. These are carried round the place with music, and are finally dedicated at the *zedi* (No. 422). In the months of *Tazáung-mòn* and *Thadíndyút* the *katín-thingán* are dedicated, and the *mathó-thingán* are woven. The *katein-thingán* is the annual supply of the primitive *parí-kaya*, and is of a nominal character, owing to the profusion of offerings at other times. The *mathó-thingán* is a cloth wherewith to deck the images of the Buddha and the *paung* of the *zedi* (Nos. 429, 449). It is the offering of the women who weave it,

417. SUNLAUNG AT THADINDYUT FESTIVAL.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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418. SUNLAUNG AT THADINDYUT FESTIVAL.

and, in order to possess its proper value, should be completed in a day and a night. This is the only approach to a vigil. The texture is loose, and broad bands of tinsel are shot through to make up the woof faster.

Tawthalín is a minor festival, falling in Lent, and observed only in Pegu. The *Tawthalín* offerings are distinguished by being in thousands, one thousand little cakes, one thousand plantains, and so on (No. 282). The number one thousand is said to be symbolical [801] of the thousand *gâta* or stanzas of the *Wéthandayâ zat*, the legend of Gawdama Buddha's last incarnation but one, closely prefiguring the final incarnation.

782 The above are the Buddhist festivals, which are celebrated by the whole population together, with all the *éclat* they can give them. The only other 776 recurring observances of a religious character have nothing to do with Buddhism, and are rejected by all earnest and enlightened Buddhists. These observances, if not furtively conducted, as is often the case, are kept by individuals only, or by households at a time; they have sufficient in common with the *nat* worship of the hill tribes, to show what the original Burman and Taláing worship may have been. Unlike the Karén, who knows only of evil *nats*, the Burman has both good and evil spirits. The former belong 776 to the land of the *zat* ro- 772 mance, the latter are chiefly 775 the survival of the primitive paganism. In the Burman cosmogony, *nat-yua* is the delectable land to which, by a courtesy analogous to the [643] German "*hoch-*" and "*höchst-selig*," the kings are said to migrate at their demise. [524] A higher order than *nat* is *thadyâ* and *thadyâ-min*, and above these the highest order of being, *byammâ*, the cloud-

419. FIRE-BALLOONS AT THADINDYUT.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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423. PROPITIATING THE LOCAL NATS (NAKKAZA).

A nat is propitiated by offerings at a shrine, almost always in miniature. Only fruit, flowers, and music are offered by Buddhists. A special genius is assigned to the dwelling—*ein-dwin Min Magayi nat*, in whose little shrine a cocoanut is offered. The nut is replaced as the water dries up, which it is assumed the *nat* has drunk. There are *nats* who preside over countries, Û Mindyi and Û Mindyâ for Burma, Û Yindyi for Pegu, Bôdaw and his sons for Thatôn, and other local *nats*. These *nats* are propitiated by such offerings as a crown, or by standing guard before their images, upon undertaking a journey, entering on a race or other contest. The five *nats* of the firmament have a special cult associated with that of the eight planets, with which the Buddha and eight *yakûnda* are mixed up. The local *nats* are most commonly propitiated in *pyatho* (December), the harvest month. The visitations of malign spirits are attributed to what the Burmans call unripe (*asîin*) deaths. Such are deaths from lightning-stroke, accidents of all sorts, child-bed, cholera, and whatever is violent and sudden. The normal re-incarnation of the *karma* of such is immature; they haunt localities as ghosts (*tasè*), and seek the bodies of the living for hosts, thereby causing sickness. Slaughter in battle accounts for a plague of this kind, and the one plague entails another.

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Pilgrimages to the great shrines are made in the dry months, especially at times of full moon. The most sacred shrine of the Peninsula and the perennial resort of pilgrims is the *zedi* on the site of the ancient Mun village Dagôn, renamed Yangôn (Rangoon). The legend declares that the original founders of the shrine deposited eight hairs

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424. SHRINE OF THE HOUSE-GENIUS—MIN MAGAYI NAT.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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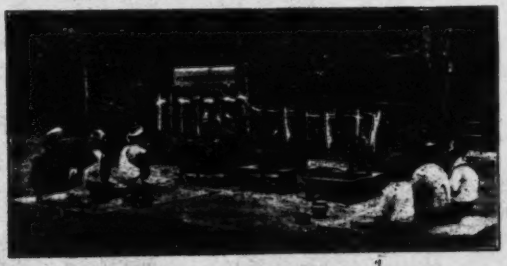
488. PROPITIATING THE NAT BODAW.

of the Buddha there. The shrine now known as *Shwe-Dagôn Payá* (*Shwe-tí gôn*) was built over by the Emperor Sinbyu Shin in 1775 and brought to its present height of about three hundred feet above the platform. It stands at the extremity of the southernmost spur of the Pegu Yôma, and occupies a commanding position over the port of Rangoon, asserting the Burman character of the place above the masts of ships that dwarf everything else. The present canopy was dedicated by King Mindôn Min in 1871, at the cost of half a million of rupees. It is not gilt in the ordinary way, but plated with gold foil. The cone of the *zedi* itself is gilt from the peak to the platform. Such a gilding costs three hundred thousand rupees and lasts fifteen to twenty years in the climate of Rangoon. Till the Shwe-Dagôn Payá was brought to its present height by the Burman conquerors, the *zedi* at the Mun capital Pegu had been the greatest in the land, though not the most sacred as a reliquary. This is *Shwe-hmáwdaw Payá*, also about three hundred feet high from platform to summit (No. 67). Its site is not so favourable as that of its rival, nevertheless the *zedi* is a noble object. After the *Shwe-Dagôn Payá* the next greatest shrine is the *Mahá-myammuni* at Āmayapôya (No. 449). This colossal image of the Buddha weighs several tons, and it was brought over the Arakán mountains by the Burman conquerors. The head was damaged when the *tazáung* over the image was burned down in



489. PROPITIATING THE NATS OF THE FIVE PLANETS.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

433. PAINTING OF KYAITTIYO PILGRIMAGE.

they study their religious books, occupy themselves with their grandchildren, teach them and tell them stories, and make toys for them. They do the light repairs of the house and gear, and when they are too old to go on pilgrimages with the others, they keep the house and tell their beads alone. The veteran can still halt to the shrine on duty-days. Every old man is by courtesy *ludyi*, and every old woman *amèdyi*. The old people wear plainer clothing than the young, and, according to old Burman fashion, less of it. The human dignity of the aged is of a kind that apparel cannot add to. Steeped in the spirit of Buddhism, the aged never yield to anger. Wanting neither for necessaries nor honour, the pathos of their serene old age is purely that of years. A peaceful end is their lot. (See *The Soul of a People*, p. 330.)

And now our Burman is equipped for the final stage. To the dead of whatever degree royal honours are accorded. The body is spoken of as *alàung*, "that which is about to be," to be something of a higher nature, namely, as the dead are spoken of in German as "blessed." The corpse is laid under a white or royal canopy, upon a temporary bier, for one or several days. The body is swathed in grave-clothes, the thumbs and great toes tied together with strips of white cotton cloth, and in the mouth of a lay person is put a gold or silver piece for *kadòga* —ferry-hire. While the body is lying in state, the catafalque (*dalà*) is being prepared for carrying the bier to the cemetery. The *dalà* is a tall erection of bamboo and paper, ending in a royal *pyatthat*, gay with colours and tinsel. The corpse is laid in a coffin similarly decorated, which is placed in or over the sarcophagus-shaped part of the *dalà*. Above the coffin

434. HOME DEVOTIONS OF THE AGED.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 APl Burma
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771 It is necessary, therefore, at the outset of our inquiry to correct this impression.

A writer on Comparative Religion is dependent on the experts from different fields, and Dr Bouquet is only repeating what a number of commentators on Burmese religion have been saying for the past fifty years. But if we examine their statements we find that many of them merely reflect, without further evidence or critical examination, an opinion expressed by a European official in a Census Report of 1891. This opinion was emphasised by another Census official, Mr. C. C. Lowis, ten years later:

"The Burman has added to his Animism just so much Buddhism as suits him and with infantile inconsequence draws solace from each in turn. I know of no better definition of the religion of the great bulk of the people ... than that given by Mr Eales in his 1891 Census Report, 'a thin veneer of philosophy laid over the main structure of Shamanistic belief.' The facts are here exactly expressed. Animism supplies the solid constituents that hold the faith together, Buddhism the superficial polish. Far be it from me to underrate the value of that philosophic veneer. It has done all that polish can do to smooth, to beautify and to brighten, but to the end of time it will never be anything more than a polish. In the hour of great heart-searchings it is profitless as the Apostle's sounding brass. It is then that the Burman falls back upon his primaeval beliefs. Let but the veneer be scratched, the crude animism that lurks below must out. Let but his inmost vital depths be touched, the Burman stands forth an Animist confessed."[4]

771 782 [563] [177] Mr Lowis' opinion is based on a critical examination of the situation, and it cannot be lightly gainsaid. He also refers to the prevailing Animistic beliefs of the surrounding hill tribes who still infiltrate into the plains of Burma, a factor which encourages the survival of primitive ideas among the Burmese themselves. This survival is not to be denied. It is impossible to live in Burma without coming across evidences of Animism, sooner or later — the coconut, surmounted by a red cloth, still hung in most Burmese households as a *Nat* offering; the 'bus driver halting his vehicle to run across the road and place a little bouquet of flowers at the foot of some tree which is the shrine of a local spirit. Most of these practices are innocent. Occasionally, however, one has a grim reminder of more fateful beliefs. Burmese students once explained to me, reluctantly, [761] that they had desisted in their efforts to save a drowning boy because it was obvious that he had been seized by the *Nat* of the lake.

[4] *Census of India Report*, Vol. XII, (Burma, 1901), Part 1, by C. C. Lowis, chap. III, p. 36.

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Animism in Burma is usually termed Nat-worship. *Nat* has been compared with the Indian, *Natha*, but it is probably an indigenous term.[5] Strictly speaking, it should be distinguished from "disembodied spirit" or ghost, for which the Burmese name is *tasi*. The Burmese also speak of the "butterfly" soul in man, the *leip-bya*, which may leave the body even in life, during dream or unconsciousness.[6] "A *nat* is something quite different. The word is the equivalent of our word god, in the sense in which we speak of the gods of ancient Greece and Rome."[7] *Nat* legends, however, express the belief that most, if not all, of these godlings were once human beings. Thus the familiar household Nat, Min Magayi, was once a blacksmith, Maung Tin Dè, a man of such prodigious strength that whenever he struck his anvil the whole city was shaken, to the great wrath of the king who caused the blacksmith's death. His spirit continued to vex the neighbourhood until a temple was built in his honour.[8] In later times such spirits seem to have been elevated to *Nat* status by royal degree. Burmese tradition emphasises *the* Thirty Seven *Nats*, but the number has no special significance. Many *Nats* not included in the thirty seven are recognised today and some of the thirty seven ignored. Any attempt to denote the *Nat* realm too narrowly misrepresents what is, in fact, a fluctuating and ill defined situation. 'All is change' applies to this realm, in Burmese estimation, as much as to any other. Nor can we point to any one origin of the cultus. The Mondaing *Nat*, for example, may reflect a primitive Nature worship, since Mondaing signifies whirlwind, but local legend suggests another origin.[9] Some of the *Nats* are associated with Brahmanic and Buddhist legend. Others are definitely local and even recent. Sir George Scott, who was an acute observer, said that the Burman always distinguished the Spirits of Nature from the legendary gods imported from India.[10] On the other hand, there is a tendency to mingle Buddhist story and Nat story, and the Buddhist *peta*, as well as the *deva* is quite at home among the Burmese *Nats*.[11]

In earlier times, a victim was slain in order to provide a guardian spirit for a new town or building, and as late as the eleventh century a queen is said to have given her life for such a purpose. Buddhist teaching against taking life has gradually prevailed, however, against these harsher

[5] Cf. Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama* Vol. I, p. 17, Vol. II, p. 334 and Temple, *The Thirty Seven Nats*, p. 8.
[6] Cf. Forbes, *British Burma*, chap. IV, p. 99.
[7] R. Grant Brown, *The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese*, p. 6.
[8] R. Grant Brown, *ibid.*, p. 12.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[10] Temple, *ibid.*, p. 2.
[11] Cf. Bimala C. Law, *The Buddhist Conception of Spirits*.

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customs. Grant Brown observes that, while Buddhists in the Chindwin area still sacrifice fowls to the god of the harvest, 'the thing is done somewhat surreptitiously and shamefacedly.'[12]

Other practices survive more openly. In many Burmese villages there is a *nat-ka-daw*, or spirit-medium, generally an elderly or middle-aged woman, who is supposed to be married to a *Nat*. She tells fortunes, and is called in sometimes in cases of sickness to discover whether the patient will recover. Mr. Spear describes an incident of this kind which took place in the main street of a large town in the presence of many spectators. "The *nat-ka-daw*, in addition to her usual clothing, wore a sash around the waist and a cloth wound around her head. She danced with a dah, a long and heavy Burmese knife, in her hand, until she fell exhausted." Plantains and coconuts had been placed in a shelter, opposite the house, as offerings to the *Nat*.[13]

In this case, apparently, the *Nat* was neither held responsible for the sickness nor expected to cure it. There are times of epidemic sickness, however, when a whole village is temporarily abandoned, and special rituals are followed to placate the *Nat*, who is considered to have caused the epidemic.

In an interesting account of the development of a modern *Nat* cultus, a Burmese writer describes a public festival in honour of the *Nat*. A play is staged during which one of the Thirty Seven *Nats*, who is personified by a villager, asks the *Nat* of the locality if he is taking due care of the villagers. Here the *Nat* is obviously regarded as benevolent. But we are told that this was not always so. Formerly the Nat was cruel, unreasonable, mischievous and demoniac. But "he is now believed to have taken to religion, to keep the sabbath and to lead the life of a saintly god." In spite of his own sanctity, however, he seems to favour evil-doers. "No organised theft is ever committed in Lower Burma ... without invoking his aid." The would-be criminals cook a meal within a circle they have marked on the ground. If any of the rules of the succeeding ritual are broken, the proposed robbery is abandoned. Some Buddhist monks of this region, more orthodox than others, have tried to suppress the Nat cultus, but in vain.[14]

Such beliefs and practices are obviously bound to affect thought and conduct. The Burmese feel around them a vast, invisible *Nat* world, which is both near and remote. There are spirits in the trees, the rivers,

[12] *The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese*, p. 9.

[13] R. F. Spear, unpublished MS, *The Syncretism of Animism and Buddhism in Burma* (1928) chap. 1, p. 14.

[14] U Tha Khin, "Is U Yin Gyi a National God of the Burmans?" *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. XIV, part II (1924).

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the lakes, the mountains and there are distant *Nat* realms ruled by *Nat* chieftains. All of these spirits are capricious. They encourage the view that life is a gamble. A man must bargain and wile his way through as best he can, hemmed in by a vague, immeasureable threat of evil. A religion, therefore, which points the way through the maze, indicates some order in the realm of caprice and promises deliverance from evil, may be the more welcome. On the other hand, it contains a challenge to caprice in oneself.

2. Animism and Buddhism interwoven

There is no question, therefore, of the survival of Animism in Burma, nor of its influence. The only question which arises is the *extent* of this influence. Is it so persistent and powerful that Buddhism is no more than a surface polish?

At first sight, this indeed may seem to be the case, for not only is Animism a parallel cultus, sometimes furtive but frequently brazen; it also seems to be interwoven in the very texture of popular Buddhist expression and practice. As a boy, the Burman learns how Nats watched over the infant Buddha, how the Buddha, by his virtue, defeated the jealous Manh *Nat*, how the rest of the *Nat* world acclaimed the victory with shouts of exultation. *Nats* appear in all the subsequent events of the Buddha's history.[15] On pagoda platforms the boy may see scenes depicting the *Nats*. Early in his education, he may learn a poem celebrating the Buddha's victory. On the most memorable day of his life as a Buddhist, the day of his *shin-byu* or confirmation, he may *shikoh* to the *Nat* shrine. At his death, a monk may be called to his side, not to give him spiritual consolation but 'because the good influence of the monk's pious presence keeps away evil spirits.'[16]

Consequently, Burmese Buddhists have been criticised for their inconsistency. How, it is asked, can a belief that a human 'spirit' has been transported to the *Nat* realm be reconciled with the Buddhist denial of the soul? If Buddhism denies the Divine, and even Buddha himself is not worshipped, how can it be right to worship and propitiate these *Nat* godlings? How can it be legitimate to expect their assistance, if man is the arbiter of his own destiny, subject to moral law alone, as Buddhism affirms? And Buddhism teaches: Thou shalt not kill. What, then, of fowls and oxen and even humans sacrificed to propitiate *Nats*? Toleration is

[15] Cf. Bigandet, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 37; cf. Temple, *Thirty Seven Nats*, p. 6.
[16] Cf. Purser and Saunders, *M.B.B.*, pp. 38, 97; Sir George Scott, *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, Vol. I, chap. XXII, p. 289.

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doubtless a virtue enjoined by Buddhism. Carried to this extreme, however, has it not distorted Buddhism beyond recognition?

The Buddhist reply is two-fold. In the first place, it is claimed that there are *Nat* beliefs and practices which are *not* inconsistent with Buddhism. Since the normal Buddhist foresees many possible rebirths before he attains Nibbāna, there is no reason why some of these rebirths should not occur in a *Nat* realm. As to the denial of the soul, that raises difficulties, but are they so very different from the questions raised by the *Jātaka* stories in Buddhist tradition itself? The learned Buddhist has his own explanations, and the villager is inclined to regard life itself as ultimately as great a mystery as Nibbāna, while he does lip service to the *an-attā* doctrine (soul-denial). 'The Buddha accepted the Indian universe of his day ready-made' with its conception of heavens and hells and innumerable worlds.[17] Popular Buddhism, as popular religion everywhere, lives in narrative form, and the ordinary Burman dwells in two worlds of story, Buddhist and *Nat*, which fuse together.

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As to *Nat* practices, some of these are innocent, and others have been given a Buddhist ethical content. Gratitude, for example, is both natural and good in itself. What harm, then, if a villager presents flowers at a *Nat* shrine from such a motive?[18] As to propititiation, even in this present life, men deem it wise to placate powerful humans. Buddhism, therefore, can wisely and tolerantly assimilate many *Nat* conceptions and practices without inconsistency. So it is argued.

Other ideas and customs, however, are admittedly incompatible with true Buddhism. These, it is claimed, have either been opposed or they have been tolerated for a time in confidence that sound religion would eventually prevail. Asked why he allowed *Nat* images in a Buddhist shrine, King A-naw-ra-hta is said to have replied, "Men will not come for the sake of the new faith. Let them come for their old gods and gradually they will be won over."[19] This confidence, it is held, has been justified:

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Buddhism has at least prevailed sufficiently to take the sting out of Animism; human sacrifice is no longer tolerated, and even animal sacrifices are furtive.

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Is there then no surviving superstitious fear of the *Nats*? This is debated. Temple quotes a formidable Oath, administered in the courts of law, which invokes the *Nats:*

"I will speak the truth.... May the Nats who guard the sacred heavens ... the keepers and warders of countless shrines ... the Nats

[17] J. B. Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, chap. v, p. 76.

[18] Moung Po Me, "Animism or Agnosticism?" *Buddhism*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1903, Rangoon), p. 95.

[19] N. Ray, *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, chap. VII, p. 263.

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Old men will retire to the monastery to end their days there, and younger men, in poverty or other distress, will flee the world for a time. The hospitality of the monks has sometimes been more charitable than discriminate, a circumstances which has brought some monasteries into disrepute, for these temporary inhabitants are allowed to wear the yellow robe, and some are criminals, sheltering from justice. Father Sangermano reports the rescue of prisoners condemned to death. "In thus saving the lives of criminals, (the monks) believe that, as their law forbids them to kill, it must be meritorious to preserve the lives of others."[24]

The monastery is the social centre of the village. Buddhism in Burma is gaily attired, a religion of festival. Frequently there will be an open-air performance in the moonlight, when a birth-story of the Buddha is dramatized. All this spirited, colourful life gathers around the monastery.

But perhaps the Order's most valuable service to the community is the function fulfilled by the monk as *counsellor*. A group of villagers may gather for a special instruction, others may attend when the monks assemble for devotions, but the monastery is not regarded as a preaching centre or as a place of public worship. In modern times, crowds have flocked to hear the Monyin Sayadaw. Generally, however, the approach in this respect is individual. It is as the individual adviser of each villager that the monk's influence is most strongly felt.

In many and tangible ways, therefore, the monastery serves the community, but it is probable that the villager himself reveres the monk more for services which are intangible and may not appear so valuable to sceptical observers. Early in the morning, the monk, attended by *koyins*, will go the round of the faithful, receiving their offerings of rice in his begging bowl.[25] For the monk himself it is an exercise in humility, for the villager it is one of the chief means of increasing that *kutho* or worthiness which ensures him happiness in this life and the next.[26]

Most of all, however, it is those very aspects of the monk's vocation which distinguish him from the rest of the community, setting him apart, for which the monk is chiefly esteemed. It is because the greater part of his life is spent in spiritual exercises which the villagers do not share, that they value him most. The monastery stands for a Way of utter renun-

[24] *The Burmese Empire*, 3d. Edition, ed. J. Jardine, (London, 1895), chap. xv, p. 122.

[25] Thus *bhikku* or *bhikṣu*, usually translated monk, means, literally, mendicant. Strictly speaking, a *bhikku* is not a monk; cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II (S.B.B.), p. 81, footnote.

[26] *Kutho* is frequently translated 'merit.' But 'worthiness' is more accurate.

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779* 775 It also modifies the sense of fatalism which might be derived from another conception, this time a Buddhist conception — the idea that a man's present character and situation are largely determined, according to inexorable moral law, by what he has done, and not done, in previous births. "As the wheel follows the draught ox, punishment follows sin."[60] Yet man is no fettered slave. Like other people the world over, the Burman vacillates between fatalism and the sense of his own power to help himself, between *Kan* and *Kutho*. On the whole, *Kutho* wins. "Merit weighs heavy, demerit light," says the Burmese proverb hopefully.

Pessimism, then, 'touched, strongly touched, with hope' – such is the Burmese religion. But what of the further qualification, 'touched with mysticism.'? We have seen that there may be an element of Nature mysticism. Can we go further and discern any sense of the sacred, any sense of religious dependence on higher power? In spite of the Nature mysticism and an occasional side glance in the direction of benevolent *Nats*, Burmese religion seems to be a religion of self-reliance, self-assurance and self-responsibility. A man 'must work out his own salvation.' Does this mean that there is nothing at all which corresponds to the Christian addition to the text — "with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you?"[61]

779* 775 782 Various efforts have been made to locate such a recognition. It is remarked that a pagoda in Prome is named "the image or pagoda where, if you pray, you will receive."[62] But the term, prayer, is used rather loosely by some present-day Buddhists. The monastery 'prayers' which we have cited could scarcely be termed prayers in any strict sense. Instances have been reported of simple villagers petitioning the Buddha for mercies, such as a child's recovery from sickness,[63] and I have myself seen women in attitudes of prayer, with clasped hands and suppliant faces, before Gautama's image. Peasants recite the 'Song of Victory", celebrating the Buddha's triumphs over foes and tempters, as a 'mantra' to ward off evil.[64] Since a man may pray that his own *Kutho* may avail to help others, a natural sequence of thought may lead him to consider that the Buddha's *Kutho* may also avail, though some would say that the Buddha is lost in Nibbāna, far beyond this present existence. It is very questionable, however, if there is any sense of Divine Grace or prayer in the sense of communion with a Divine Being.

779* 773 The Buddha is certainly venerated. No account of Burmese Buddhism would be adequate without emphasising very definitely the central place he holds in the life and thought of the people. Popular Buddhism, as we

[60] *M.B.B.*, p. 45.
[61] *2 Philippians* 2: 12, 13.
[62] *M.B.B.*, p. 70.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[64] *M.B.B.*, p. 97.

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776 ous buildings, such as monasteries, /208/ monas-
777 tic rest houses and wooden chapels. The bury-
782 ing alive of human sacrifices at the posts of
776 the foundations of the entrances was in old Bur-
mese days considered as an indispensable method of protecting important buildings, such as princely palaces, city gates, bridges, etc. The ghost of the entombed—according to Burmese belief those who have been killed by violence are rooted to the spot where they died--is supposed to watch as a guardian over the building, post, or bridge foundation.

782 As late as the middle of the past century,
787 more than fifty human beings were buried alive when the foundations for the palace and the city walls of Mandalay were laid. But the protective power of those ghosts was of limited duration. From certain omens it could be predicted that the protection was going to cease, and then it was time to leave the place which was open to disaster. This was the explanation given for the frequent change of residence of the Burmese rulers. The small chapels with their stone images of door guardians at the gates and corners of the walls of the palace area of Mandalay still indicate the locations where these human sacrifices have been buried, though the modern inhabitants will not admit this to a European. At the corners, filled oil jugs were sunk over the buried people; the dwindling of the oil in the containers, which were examined every seven years, foreshadowed an approaching catastrophe in 1880. They tried to avoid this catastrophe with new sacrifices. Nevertheless, it happened. The British occupied the country and the kingdom perished (10).

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782 10. Primarily, according to Shway Yoe, ibid., pp. 482 ff. It is well known that the burying of live sacrifices at construction foundations is a custom, widespread all over the world,

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which was not at all unknown in European countries. About it see: R. Andree, Ethnographische Parallelen /Ethnographic Parallels/ (1878), pp. 18 ff.; F.S. Krauss, "Das Bauopfer bei den Südslaven" /Building Sacrifice among the Southern Slavs/, Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft zu Wien /Proceedings of the Vienna Anthropological Society/, Vol. 17 (1887), pp. 16 ff.; W.T. Brigham, The Ancient Hawaiian House (Memoirs B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu II, 3), pp. 27 ff.

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In earlier days every Burmese settlement was surrounded by a fortification, cities having stone walls or stockades, the villages impenetrable fences of close rows of thorny bamboo shrubs, prickly cacti, or palisade-like fences of bamboo poles between which pointed bamboo stakes protruded. The latter type of fortification exists today only in the areas where the mountain tribes live, beyond the zone of British administration. Before B [628] [674] the British took over, the constant feuds between the individual tribes and the excesses of robbery made it necessary for each village to protect itself like a fort. With the increased safety of travel and property under the British rule this has become more and more unnecessary, although some districts still experience nocturnal robberies. The villages in the Prome District, which has one of the worst criminal records in Burma, are with practically no exfeptions enclosed by dense high, thorny hedges which have only narrow entrances.

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The buildings of the Shan (11)--population in

11. Cf. especially L. Milne, Shans at Home (London, 1910), pp. 100 ff.; A.K. Gebauer, "Die nördlichen Schanstaaten und ihre Bewohner" /The Nor-